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LEAVES

FROM

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

BY

CHARLES SHAW.



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LEAVES FROM THE BOOK OF LIFE.

LEAF THE FIRST.

THE REGICIDE'S FAMILY.

INDIVIDUALS and families, "kingdoms, principalities, and powers," have their rise and fall. Every institution of man must fade and perish. Nothing can be eternal that is the work of man. "We have no continuing city here."

But nations and individuals, as they have their rise and fall, must also have their alternations of adversity and prosperity,—their sea is not always tranquil, nor is it always troubled; and if there be exceptions to this general decree, which seem to interrupt the general harmony of the system, we may be sure that it is our ignorance and blindness which cannot see the motive or trace the cause. They are, equally with all His other works, the proofs not only of God's omnipotence, but of His superintending beneficence and care. It is under this conviction that we ought to enter upon the history of the royal house of Stuart, lest we presumptuously arraign the justice of that Providence which suffered it

to be the victim of almost uninterrupted calamity from its accession to its close.*

It is under this feeling that I have at length found resignation under the misfortunes which have uniformly marked the career of a less illustrious family—my own!

The family of Whalley was settled in Devonshire long before the reign of Henry the Eighth; but it had not been distinguished either in peace or war. The possessor of the estate at the commencement of Henry the Eighth's reign had contracted an intimacy with a Devonshire gentleman of the name of Russell. By his interest, my ancestor was chosen to be one of the commissioners at the dissolution of the religious houses. That he did not discharge the duties of his office with humanity and forbearance I am sorry to be forced to admit, and hence the Papists have imputed to those acts of severity the misfortunes that have visited us to the present day.

* James the First—taken prisoner on his passage to France, and confined for years in Windsor Castle, but afterwards restored to his throne and assassinated.

James the Second—killed by the bursting of a cannon.

James the Third—assassinated.

James the Fourth—killed at Flodden Field.

James the Fifth—died of a broken heart.

Mary Stuart—beheaded.

James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England—a natural death.

Charles the First—beheaded.

Charles the Second—a natural death.

James the Second—expelled from his throne, and died in exile. His descendants defeated in two attempts to regain the throne, and the last male descendant, Cardinal York, died in exile!

Henry, as is well known, did not seize the property of the Church from any deep hatred of the Papist, nor from any decisive preference for the Protestant faith. Had the Pope acceded to his demand of a divorce from Catherine of Arragon, the Papist religion might have remained, at least for a time, the religion of the realm, and the king would have better deserved the title conferred upon him by the Pope, of *Fidei defensor*, a title which, with strange inconsistency, is still preserved by a Protestant Monarch. The king's anger against the Pope encouraged complaints against the conduct of the priesthood, and made him listen to the proposal of seizing their possessions, a measure which would at once enable him to gratify his own pleasures, and reward those who pandered to them. It may well be supposed that the commissioners entered upon their functions with little inclination to be just or impartial. The abuses which prevailed in some monastic establishments were declared to be common to all, and the monks and nuns were involved in one sweeping censure and condemnation. Such indiscriminate charges could not be true; but what else could be expected from men who were influenced by the double desire of gratifying their sovereign and enriching themselves?

These religious establishments had no power of appeal, and no means of resistance. Many afflicting scenes marked their expulsion from the homes that had afforded shelter and safety to them and their predecessors for hundreds of years. The old and infirm, who hoped to die in peace

where they had lived, expostulated with tears and lamentations. Some expired on the spot as soon as their expulsion was announced ; others lost their senses ; many clung to the images before which they had been in the daily practice of prostration and prayer. Some, indeed, assuming a bolder front, poured forth execrations against their spoilers, and lifted up their voices in prophecies of calamity and evil. The abbot of the monastery of Cowdray, in Sussex, invoked the curse of fire and water upon every possessor of the monastery to the latest posterity. These predictions and maledictions were little heeded ; the spoliation and seizure were completed, and my ancestor obtained for his reward one of the dissolved abbeys in the county of Devon.

It was a very general belief in that age that the tombs and coffins of the monks contained treasures, either in the precious metals or in jewels. Hence the grave was no longer suffered to be a sanctuary for the dead, and the bones and dust of those who hoped to rest in peace till the final judgment were profaned and scattered to the winds. In the chapel of our monastery there was a magnificent monument to the memory of the first abbot, whose statue was placed upon a marble pedestal that covered the tomb. In the hope of finding great wealth, the only son of the commissioner resolved to break it open ; but in the attempt the statue fell upon his head and crushed him to death.

Deprived thus of his only child, the commissioner

dragged on a melancholy existence till the beginning of the reign of Queen Mary, and was succeeded by his nephew. The accession of Mary changed the aspect of affairs. Such of the excluded monks as were still living were replaced in the possession of the abbey, but were at length finally expelled in the reign of Elizabeth. The possession was then restored to our family; but the members dropped off one by one, till at length an only son was left, whose health was so precarious that it was feared he would never arrive at man's estate. But he disappointed these expectations, became vigorous both in body and mind, and was the intimate friend of Sir Walter Raleigh. He accompanied him in all his enterprises, shared his fortune good and bad, and participated in his imprisonment and disgrace. After Sir Walter's execution, he was detained in the Tower for several months, but was permitted to see his wife and son. Into the mind of the latter he instilled that hatred of the reigning family, which had become the absorbing principle of his character, and he lived to see his wishes fully and fatally accomplished.

This son, Richard Whalley, became a member of parliament, and was one of the judges by whom Charles the First was condemned to death.

It has been said that Cromwell prevailed upon some of the regicides to take part in the trial of the king by the promise of not proceeding to the last extremity, and, in corroboration of this assertion, I must mention that there was found

among the papers of Richard Whalley a minute or memorandum of a conversation between himself and Cromwell upon this subject. It seems to have been written immediately after it had occurred.

After Colonel Pride had excluded from the House of Commons about two hundred of the Presbyterian party, the whole power of the Parliament was exercised by the most violent of another party,—the Independents, not more than sixty in number. It was then resolved to bring the king to trial. The Independents, who were not ignorant that whatever authority they possessed was subordinate to the will and power of the army, were anxious that the army alone should execute that daring enterprise, and Richard Whalley was deputed to hold a secret conference with Cromwell. But hasty and impatient in his temper, Richard was no match for the coolness and cunning of Cromwell. He held that as the king had levied an army against the people, and had been taken, and was now in the custody of the army, it would be but just to subject him to military law and to a court-martial. This argument, if it could be called one, was weak and worthless, and was easily beat down and refuted by Cromwell.

CROMWELL.—“Nay, Richard Whalley, Richard Whalley, thou dost not see the slough and mire into which thy rash counsel would lead us. Would not the nation, and more particularly those saving saints who pledged themselves to

the good cause, and have worked out their salvation in fear and trembling, say that we had no end in view but that of raising a military government on the ruins of the kingly one? Nay, Richard, thou art one of our goodly pillars, and shouldst uphold us in our labour of love. Credit me, who yearnest after thee in strong brotherly affection, that I could be well content to turn back from the field and leave this bereaved land, rather than see thee take thy hand from the plough, now that it is rooting out the impure weeds and preparing the earth for an abundant harvest. Thou art the mouth-piece of the Parliament, our masters; and as it representeth the people, whose rights the man Charles has trampled upon, it is only by and in the name of the Parliament that he should be brought to trial.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“And the army, friend Oliver, of which thou art the right hand and head?

CROMWELL.—“Shall assist thee in the good work. Trust me, Richard, it is not from fear of men's evil report that I shrink from the whole responsibility; but the Parliament is the true organ of the will of the nation.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“Thou mayest remember, Oliver, a discourse with Ireton upon this very subject, soon after Cornet Joyce had carried off Charles from Holdenby—’twas a bold deed of Master Joyce.

CROMWELL.—“Heaven set him upon the goodly task.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“And thou didst not disapprove of it?

CROMWELL.—“Thou sayest right, but nathless my flesh did tremble with very fear at the threats and anger of the parliamentary commissioners.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“Truly, they were sorely amazed, and wot not what to do; but 'twas no use, they said, to keep the stable locked when the steed was stolen, and so they resolved to go back to Parliament.”

Here Richard Whalley burst into a laugh, and even Cromwell hazarded a smile.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“But, setting aside all unseemly mirth, when thou didst touch upon bringing the king to trial, I put it to thee, in the presence of Ireton, what thou didst purpose further with the king?

CROMWELL.—“The first step must be to pass a vote by the Parliament against him for high treason. This done, we shall appoint a High Court of Parliament for his trial. Thou knowest we have scripture authority, for what says the Psalmist?—‘Let the high praises of God be in the mouths of their saints, and a two-fold sword in their hands to execute vengeance upon the heathen;* to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgments written: this, however, have all saints—’

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“A truce, Oliver, to this appli-

* Cromwell omitted another purpose which this two-fold sword was to execute—“punishment upon the people.” He did not, however, forget this purpose when he arrived at the sovereign power.

cation of scriptural texts to the purposes of this world ; leave them to Mad Peter and his followers. Let us speak like men of the world, who have to do the business of the world.

CROMWELL.—“ As you will, Richard. We bring Charles Stuart to trial, and he is found guilty, though God knows the petitions I have got up night and day for his restoration, if it might consist with God's good providence. Of necessity, if he be found guilty, sentence must be pronounced upon him ; for, wherefore bring him to trial, if there is to be no result, and the court is not to pronounce upon the charges laid against him ? Answer me this, Richard ?

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“ Thus far, no doubt.

CROMWELL.—“ What other conclusion can we come to than that sentence of death must be passed ? There is no lesser punishment for treason.

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“ But thou canst not, darest not, mean to execute it !

CROMWELL.—“ Softly, softly ! Unless we pronounce the sentence, and declare that he has forfeited the crown, we cannot proceed to the settlement of the government upon a republican basis. But means may be found,—do'st mind me, Richard ?—to waive the execution of the sentence—to change it to imprisonment, or perhaps to exile. Means may be found, Richard—mark me !

RICHARD WHALLEY.—“ On that assurance, I will lend

my hand to the great work. But his life, Oliver—his life!"

If such a conversation were actually held, it lessens the guilt of Richard Whalley, though it shows him to have been totally ignorant of the real character of Cromwell.

Richard Whalley, as is well known, was one of the king's judges, and signed the death-warrant, persuading himself that it was not meant to be carried into execution. To get rid of Whalley's reproaches, Cromwell contrived to send him on a mission to the north, which detained him till after the king's execution.

Whether my ancestor made any remonstrance to Cromwell,—which, however, would have been useless, I know not. But the events that followed abated his hostility to the Stuart family, by showing him that a worse tyranny had been established by Cromwell than was ever contemplated by Charles. He retired, therefore, from public life to the abbey, and remained there till the restoration. Excepted from pardon, he had great difficulty in escaping arrest; but the contiguity of the sea-coast, and the assistance of a relation, enabled him to embark for America. Yet even there concealment and safety were difficult; the most positive instructions having been sent to all the provincial governors to seize and send him to England. But he defeated all their efforts by finding an asylum in the most western part of the province, near the Indian frontier.

There, with few incidents to vary its monotony, he passed the remainder of his life, which extended to the end of the reign of Charles the Second. His wife and son, a youth of about fifteen years of age, survived him ; to them he gave injunctions to return to England, where his wife's relations resided, and where the mother would be better able to promote the interests of her son.

Upon their arrival in London they were received with little cordiality by her brother, whose principles were diametrically opposed to those of her husband. But he could not withhold his protection, and the son was received into his uncle's counting-house. Amongst the few followers of the adverse fortunes of James the Second, *the uncle* was one. He arranged all his mercantile affairs soon after the landing of King William ; and, removing to Paris, was taken into the councils and confidence of the exiled monarch. His sister and nephew accompanied him ; and, by a strange fatality, the son of him who had signed the death-warrant of Charles became one of the most strenuous supporters of the claims of James. He was actively engaged in all the attempts made to restore the family to the throne,—was the bearer of the secret order to the Earl of Mar, in 1715, to take up arms, and was present at all the battles as the Earl's aide-de-camp. Meanwhile, death had removed his uncle and his mother from the scene ; but he himself, who had married soon after the rebellion, in 1715, continued faithful to the interests of the Stuarts, and, though seventy-

four years of age at the breaking out of the rebellion in 1745, joined Prince Edward's army with his eldest son. At the fatal battle of Culloden this son was killed; and the father, taken prisoner, was executed with many of his comrades at Carlisle.

There now remained of our family only his widow and his second son, and they were in narrow circumstances; for the greater part of their wealth had been lavished in the royal cause. The prince could not alleviate them, for his own situation was nearly as forlorn as that of any of his adherents. Neglect he might have expected, as he was no longer able to assist the projects of the French government, but he could hardly have been prepared for the personal insult of being bound like a malefactor and sent out of the kingdom. To which power the greater share of infamy belongs—the power which urged such a measure, or the power which had the pusillanimity to comply with it—history must determine.

A long period now ensued—a period of continual struggles against adversity; for the same misfortune which had overwhelmed the Stuarts seemed to be the doom of all their adherents. Thousands fell on the field of battle, and they were perhaps the least to be deplored. Others pined in secret, banished from the homes of their forefathers, from relatives, and from friends. Many, ignorant of the language, knew not how to make their wants known, and sought in death that quiet which had been denied them in life. The high-born were compelled to accept the most subordinate

situations, and to submit to the control of those to whom their wishes had formerly been commands.

The place of clerk in a counting-house was at length obtained for the solitary offspring who, with his mother, had survived the fatal battle of Culloden. In a few years she was gathered to her ancestors, and forty years of steady application to business obtained for her son admission as a partner in the house. He had married soon after the death of his mother, and no events of any importance disturbed the even tenor of his life to the period of the revolution. I was the only offspring of his marriage.

History now opened her blackest page, and order and law, morality and religion, were proscribed throughout the land. Then began a system of persecution and of violence, the like of which eye had never seen, nor tongue recounted, nor human nature endured. But I mean not to dwell upon the revolution further than as it affected our personal history. The quiet pursuits of commerce and manufactures were all deranged. Arts and sciences were disparaged, and even considered criminal. The endearing enjoyments of domestic life were abandoned, and home had no longer its charms and its comforts. Political discussion occupied all conversation, and the rights of man were loudly proclaimed amidst the violation of all these principles of honesty and justice. Every one erected himself into the office of legislator and statesman. Reason, judgment, and moderation seemed to have fled from the earth and abandoned it to all the evils

which result from the most brutal ignorance and the vilest of passions.

There was this difference between my father and his partner. He would have still pursued the unambitious paths of commerce without mixing in the politics of the day, but his partner had become a thorough revolutionist, and a leading member of the clubs by which the legislature was overawed and governed. Carrying into practice the principle that "he who is not for me is against me," he viewed the mild qualities of my father as indications of hostility to the revolution, and such frequent quarrels ensued that my father determined to dissolve the partnership and retire from France. I was then (1793) about twenty years of age, and was chiefly employed in travelling to the great commercial cities of Lyons, Bordeaux, and Marseilles. During my absence, in the spring of that year, there had been increasing animosity between the partners, and my father had so far departed from his usual moderation as to express his fears that the revolution would become a curse to the country instead of a blessing. This was a pretext of which his partner did not fail to take immediate advantage. He denounced him to the Jacobin club, and my good and innocent father was sent to the Conciergerie. Denunciation, trial, condemnation, and death, followed quick. He was brought before the revolutionary tribunal next day, and upon the single evidence of his partner was found guilty and condemned to die. My mother, who was present at the

trial, unable to restrain her feelings, exclaimed that if the tribunal sentenced a man upon such testimony, they were guilty of shedding innocent blood. Here was double proof of disaffection ; the sentiments of the wife, taken as proofs of the principles of the husband, were considered as sufficient evidence of the guilt of both, and my mother was immediately placed upon her trial. It occupied less time than I have taken to relate it, and both were sentenced to death within four-and-twenty hours.

It was in this interval that I returned from one of my journeys, and, strange to say, with lighter spirits than I had ever experienced before. I anticipated the warmth of my parents' welcome—I pictured to myself their anxious watching at the gate to catch the earliest glimpse of my approach—I felt myself already in their arms—I beheld them fixing their looks upon me, to ascertain the state of my health ; and in this delightful frame of mind I reached our home. *Our* home ! Alas ! alas ! nor father nor mother were ever doomed to see it more.

I entered the court-yard ; it was silent and desolate ; not a living creature was visible. Conceive—no ; it is not possible to conceive—the utter misery of that moment ! It seemed as if the grave had suddenly enclosed them in its dark, dark bosom, and that no one had been left to break the fatal tidings. I staggered into the house, and there heard a voice I had never heard before,—stern, hoarse, and vulgar. A door was thrown open, and a gendarme stood

before me. Stupefied with horror and surprise, I was not able to utter a word. I advanced, however, towards him, and should have fallen to the ground had he not supported me to a seat. It was our usual sitting room: there, fronting me, were their dear portraits,—their eyes fixed upon me with all the warmth of parental affection. The sight roused me from my stupor, and an agony of tears recalled me to myself. There were two gendarmes in the room, and with a touch of feeling which their hard occupation had not extinguished, they looked at each other in silence, and then with a pitying expression at me. I seized the hands of each; I adjured them, in the name of that God whose children we all were, to keep a son no longer in suspense. The fatal truth was then disclosed, and I fell to the ground as if I had been shot. It was long before my senses returned, or that I had any other than an indistinct and confused recollection of some great and appalling calamity.

At length, the truth was revealed in all its horrors! How I controlled, by an almost supernatural effort, the agony of my grief, that it might not impair the power of action, I know not. I impressed upon my mind that there would always be a time for sorrow; that a few hours only remained, beyond which all human assistance would be too late. I flew to the house of the president of the revolutionary tribunal. I prayed—I implored his mercy. I grovelled on my knees before him. I offered him wealth. I desired him to take my life, and spare that of my parents. He

spurned me from him, and brutally told me that it had been well for the public safety if I had been included in the same proscription, for I was tainted with the same guilt. I was indeed! But this was no time for inactive sensibility. On—on to action! The authors of my being, my kind, fond parents, are in the grasp of the tigers; the gloom of the prison is about them; the darkness of death will soon surround them. The day is waning; the sun is sinking in the west; and they are living. But—to-morrow!—to-morrow!

I hastened from the president's house to the residence of my parents' murderer, his partner. I had the meanness (but what would I not have done to have saved their lives?) to fall down at his feet and to implore his mediation with the revolutionary leaders. He was deaf to all my prayers, and, indignation getting the better of prudence, I rose from the ground with fury, and struck the villain to the earth.

No resource was now left. I had but one more duty to perform;—to see my parents for the last time, to bid and receive from them an eternal farewell.—“Oh God! oh God! Thou knowest the bitter agony of that moment!”

The Conciergerie is, of all the prisons of Paris, the most savage and appalling. But its horrors were increased by the cruel conduct of the jailors, who were selected from the coarsest and most brutal of the Jacobin faction. I had a permission to see my dear parents, and the jailor told me, after inspecting it, that as my father was going a long

journey, he had a priest with him, *pour graisser ses bottes*. He then pointed to a cell at the extremity of a long dark passage. I was now within a few steps of that dear and honoured father ; I heard his voice in earnest prayer, he was calling upon his son and blessing him : "It would have softened the bitterness of death, had I been permitted to hold him once more in my arms and give him my parting blessing ; but if God shall not grant that permission, His will be done." My entrance into the cell threw a shade over the holy book in his hands ; he looked up, and the son and father were locked in each other's arms : "God has heard my prayer." He strained me in his embrace, and then he laid his reverend head on my shoulder, and wept bitterly and long. The priest withdrew into the passage to leave us alone. My father had abandoned all hope of life, but I recounted to him my interviews with the president and with his partner, which so alarmed him for my safety, that he made me promise to leave France as soon and as secretly as I could. Apprehensive of my being searched on quitting the prison, he gave me a small key which opened a secret recess in our house known only to himself. In that recess he had deposited a considerable part of his property. The key he concealed in one of the curls of my hair, and having done this, he charged me with the tenderest message to my mother, assuring her of his entire resignation to the will of God, beseeching her forgiveness for having involved her in his fate, and desiring us to pray that we might be re-united

in another and a better world. These directions were conveyed with many breaks and pauses, with exclamations of the deepest anguish, and bursts of uncontrollable grief. The good priest now warned us of the jailor's approach, who, seeing us cling to each other in the closest embrace, would have torn us asunder ; but the priest, putting back his arm, led me gently out of the cell. I staggered to a stone bench, where the priest moistened my parched and quivering lips with a draught of water.

My mother had been separated from my father as soon as they arrived at the prison. Poor sufferer ! she had been visited by successive fainting fits, and life seemed only to be preserved by the unremitting care of one of those pious females, a *sœur de la charité*, whose reward is not of this world. She was in one of those fits when I entered the cell, her head reclining on the neck of her humane attendant ; but oh how changed ! such deep deep lines of desolation and sorrow. The good sister motioned to me to be silent : I threw myself at my mother's feet, I took her dear cold hands in mine,—“My mother ! my mother !” She recovered suddenly, as the sound struck upon her ear, and, looking at me, with a wild scream fell on my neck and wept : “My son, my son ! God is good, God is good !” She then pushed me from her that she might survey me more intently, and again strained me to her closer and closer : “My boy, my boy ! and your father and my dear husband ?” I disclosed to her his last wishes, and she said she would be

comforted, and then she wept more bitterly, and we prayed together as my father had enjoined us, and we knelt to bid each other a last last farewell. “But no! no! I cannot—I cannot.”

The jailor tore us from each other's arms, and my mother fell senseless to the ground.

Morning came, and I was an orphan.

The good priest had waited for me, and led me from the prison to his own house, and there I remained for many days, wholly insensible, and in a brain fever. It was some time before I could walk, or arrange my ideas with any clearness and distinctness. The good priest and his sister, the *sœur de la charité*, had been my patient and kind nurses; and from them I learned that my dear father and mother had submitted to their fate with the most pious resignation.

It now became necessary for me to find out the best means of following my father's injunctions; but to do this it was requisite in the first instance to get possession of the contents of my father's recess, the key of which had been found by the priest during my illness. There were title deeds, and bonds, and securities for money, but these were all worthless, for the estate had been confiscated; there was however gold which would be of the utmost service, could any safe means be found of getting at the recess. To have gone myself would have been madness; it would have been dangerous either for the priest or his sister; but the latter recollects a gendarme whose daughter she had attended

and whose recovery she had effected by her skill, kindness, and perseverance. Deeply grateful for such a service, the gendarme was consulted and trusted. It was besides to him neither a difficult nor a dangerous commission, for it might be supposed that he was acting by superior orders. He found the recess, and brought away the gold in safety. Part of it I forced upon the priest, to enable him to assist the unfortunate more effectually, and to the gendarme I gave a sum as a marriage portion for his daughter.

My situation was full of peril. It was necessary to quit Paris—but the difficulty!

“There is no flying hence, nor tarrying here!”

The reign of terror was at its height; cruelty and crime were triumphant throughout a land favoured almost above every other by the bounties of Providence. Revolutionary tribunals in every town, scaffolds in every village; religion scoffed at and banished from the earth, the existence of God denied, and the hope of a better world, which sustains us in all sickness and in all sorrow, proclaimed to be vain and delusive,—death was decreed to be eternal sleep.

It was about a month after the murder of my parents that my protectors and myself were sitting together discoursing on the necessity, yet danger, of my departure. It was nearly midnight, for domiciliary visits were so frequent that the time of going to rest was protracted to as late an hour as possible, that the inmates might not be roused from their beds by those terrible agents of tyranny. We were

startled by a low tap at the door. We remained silent and motionless. In about three or four minutes the tap was repeated. The priest moved towards the door; we would have prevented his opening it, but he remarked that had it proceeded from an officer of the police, it would have been louder and more imperative. As soon as the door was ajar, a hand was thrust forward, which dropped a note, and was instantly withdrawn. It was as follows:—

“There will be a domiciliary visit in the course of the night. He must set off at once.”

This was decisive. To have disregarded it would not only have been fatal to myself, but to my protectors, and this was not to be thought of. Little preparation was necessary. My gold was secured in a belt round my body; my dress was such as is usually worn by tradesmen. I left the house by a door which opened into an obscure and little frequented street, near the Rue des Carmes.

Behold me now, on the 20th October, 1793, in the streets of Paris, at one o'clock in the morning, a lonely, solitary being. What path to take I knew not, for every one was full of danger. After a few minutes' deliberation, I took the direction of the Barrière de St. Denis, not with the intention of passing it, which I knew to be impracticable, but with the hope of finding some unwatched and decayed part of a wall on the right side of the barrier. The darkness of the night was favourable, inasmuch as it enabled me to proceed with more security; but it prevented

me from ascertaining the exact route, and created considerable delay. On turning the angle of a street, I came suddenly upon a night patrol. They were vociferating one of their republican songs, and, as they were intoxicated, I hoped to escape notice. "Qui va là ?" and I was instantly surrounded. With a presence of mind which extremity of peril sometimes gives us, I affected the gait and manner of a drunken man, repeated the refrain of a song, without appearing to attend to them, and went on staggering and singing. I was suffered to proceed without molestation. About two in the morning I reached the wall, and easily climbed it; but I had no sooner got to the other side than a gun was fired, which made me run as fast as I could till I arrived at the foot of Montmartre. The road from Montmartre to St. Denis is extremely flat and monotonous, and so open that any attempt at concealment during the day-time would have been unavailing. I was, therefore, anxious to get beyond St. Denis before daybreak, knowing that the country from thence to Luzarches and Chantilly is more enclosed and woody. St. Denis is always full of troops and gendarmes, and my heart sank within me as I approached it. There are, as at the entrance of all towns, a bureau de police and the octroi. To be discovered and taken before any of the officers without a passport was certain destruction; besides, there might have been an order to arrest me, and a description, or *signalement*, of my person, features, colour of my hair, eyes, &c. Fortunately the night was so

cold, dark, and windy, that the officers were not on the alert, preferring the inside of the bureau, and thinking probably that few would venture out on such a night as this. I passed, therefore, without being seen, and got into the middle of the town. There was not a human creature visible; even the dog ceased to bark, and sought a refuge from the inclemency of the night; so profound was the silence that every step I took was loud and distinct enough to be heard at a street's distance. I turned up a narrow street that leads to the venerable abbaye, which the sacrilegious hand of the revolution had already defaced, destroying its tombs, and scattering to the air the bones and ashes of a hundred kings. By an obscure street, and by crossing one or two fields, I found myself at length on the other side of the town, and on the high road to Ecouen. Five o'clock had just struck, and in less than an hour day would dawn; but I reached Ecouen, and concealed myself in the thickest part of the woody hill, on the declivity of which the town is situated. Here I was compelled to remain till night, with the additional misery of hunger and thirst. No traveller ever hailed the dawn with so much transport as I did the approach of night. I set forward to Luzarches. Everyone who has travelled that road knows that there are many small public-houses or cabarets on the road-side for the accommodation of the poorer sort of travellers, carters, peasants, and postillions. Fainting almost with fatigue and the want of food, I passed two, but they were full of guests,

and I dared not enter. The third was more propitious, two females only being in the kitchen, the mistress, seemingly, and her daughter. I staggered rather than walked in, and requested to have some food as quick as possible. There was, I suppose, something in my look and manner that arrested the attention of the mother. "You do indeed look worn out; why do you travel on foot by night, and in times like these?" I stammered out a reply that I had a long journey and little time, and was obliged to travel night and day. "Poor youth! your parents should have spared you such fatigue!" Parents!—the very word, added to the fatigue and peril I had endured, quite unmanned me, and I burst into an agony of tears. I became immediately the object of the tenderest attention, and, whilst both of them attempted to comfort me, they bestirred themselves with redoubled diligence to set a comfortable meal before me. Hungry as I was, my eyes were constantly directed to the door; observing which, they immediately shut and fastened it. We then conversed upon the present state of affairs, for Luzarches had already felt the tyranny of the revolution. The good pastor of Luzarches, whose whole life had been spent in acts of kindness and benevolence, had been denounced in his seventieth year, taken up, tried, and executed within the period of two days. "May the vengeance of heaven overtake his enemies!" It was impossible to doubt her sincerity and humanity, and I resolved to make known to her my melan-

choly story. It was heard with tears and pity, and many an honest burst of indignation against the authors of such atrocious cruelty. But the humanity of woman is not a mere passing feeling ; it does not think that it has done its duty when it has given vent to tears and lamentations. It is essentially stirring and active. It tries all means to baffle the machinations of the oppressor ; it takes to its protection the cause and the person of the oppressed ; it thinks nothing done so long as anything remains to be done.—

Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.

The night proved so tempestuous that no travellers intruded upon us, and we had full leisure for a long and uninterrupted conversation.

The husband and son of my hostess were carriers of goods between Paris, Amiens, and Abbeville. They were now on the road from Paris with goods for all the towns between the capital and Abbeville, and were expected at Luzarches during the course of the night. They would be able, in the opinion of my hostess, to convey me as far as Abbeville. But the danger in which I might involve the whole family ! She made light of it. “ If kind actions could always be done without danger, where would be the merit of them ? ”

During the night the husband and son arrived from Paris, and whilst I was enjoying a long and sound sleep they consulted on the best means of assisting my escape. It was resolved that I should pass for a friend of his son,

who was obliged to remain at home on account of illness. Towards the evening, we prepared for our departure. The last act of my hostess was equally delicate and humane; as it was probable that I might be poor as well as desolate, she forced upon me two pieces of six francs with earnestness, but not without timidity. I accepted them under a promise that, at some happier period, she should see how carefully I had preserved them; at the same time, I insisted that she should exchange her gift for four pieces of gold, which I put into her hands, and the same sum into her daughter Nannette's. And then, with an affected gaiety, and a promise to be present at Nannette's wedding, we parted, with many a prayer for our mutual welfare.

It is unnecessary to enter into the details of our journey till we arrived at Amiens. We did not meet with any obstacle, for my friendly carrier was known along the whole road, which he had travelled for upwards of twenty years. At Amiens we halted at a cabaret, the usual rendezvous of all the carriers from Paris to every part of the north of France. They were a frank and jovial set, with whom, in happier times, I should have been highly amused. Of political matters they seemed either to be as ignorant as if no such event as the revolution had taken place, or as if it would be presumption in them to make it the subject of conversation and discussion. The jest and the song went round, and all was one scene of gaiety and laughter. In this manner was the night wearing away, when three

gendarmes made their appearance. To me, it may well be conceived, they were objects of infinite apprehension,—for, being known to most of the carriers, their presence neither imposed silence, nor checked the merriment of the company. It afforded rather an additional motive for prolonging the festivities of the night. But the gendarmes had been despatched from Paris upon affairs of moment; for, to this corps, in every part of France, was committed the task of discovering and arresting suspected persons, deserters from the army, and travellers without passports. They were employed on such a service at present; and, entertaining no suspicion of any of the present company, mixed in the jollity of the moment, and began to be communicative. They informed us that many more aristocrats had been guillotined, and many suspicious persons taken up, in consequence of the domiciliary visits. In some instances, however, they had failed. One person, to whose arrest the greatest importance was attached, because, from his frequent journeys to the south and east of France, he was supposed to be in close correspondence with the emigrants, had escaped, and was believed to be on his way to the coast. One of the gendarmes then produced a placard or *signalement*, which he read, that any of the carriers, who might fall in with such a person, might know and arrest him. What were my feelings when I found it was my own? Setting forth my name and former employment; describing my person accurately; imputing to me designs of the most

anti-revolutionary nature ; and actually accusing me of an attempt to murder a good and active citizen, who had attempted to deliver me up to justice. (This was the partner whom I had struck to the earth, and who had in revenge denounced me.) "The villain !" I exclaimed, "the base, treacherous villain !" Every eye was fixed upon me. All conversation was suspended ; for a minute or two not a word was spoken. But the presence of mind of the kind carrier saved me. "Villain indeed," he said, "to attempt such a murder ; no wonder that it excites the indignation of all good citizens !" The gendarmes were thus put upon the wrong scent, and my friend's explanation removed all suspicion from their minds, if indeed they had entertained any. They then proceeded to inform us of the effect of some of the domiciliary visits ; and they read from a public journal one account which, whilst it filled me with grief and indignation, might at once have put an end to all expectations of escape, and even to life itself. It was the account of the domiciliary visit at the house of the good priest on the night of my departure.

"The officers of the police, in consequence of information that the son of a notorious aristocrat, who, with his wife, had justly suffered death a few weeks before, (my good and virtuous parents !) was concealed in the house of the Curé Durançon, made a domiciliary visit on the night of the 20th of October ; but after the most rigorous search, the object of their visit was not accomplished. But

the curé and his sister, a *sœur de la charité*, were arrested and sent to prison."

"Merciful God!—the good curé and his sister taken up!" The whole company were struck with astonishment. "Do you know them?" asked one of the gendarmes. "The good sister restored one of my family to health: can I be otherwise than shocked at her imprisonment?"

"The curé and his sister were immediately carried before the Committee of Public Safety and examined. The curé replied, that he had administered the last consolations of religion to the father,—that his death, with that of his wife, had deprived the son of his senses,—that he had received him into his house, where he had been attended by himself and his sister, and that he had left it suddenly before he was perfectly restored to health. To the question, why he had not informed the authorities of his having sheltered him, he replied, that no *mandat d'arrêt* had been issued against him, nor any charge of infraction of the law. That in receiving him, he had only listened to the voice of duty, which bade him assist 'the fatherless and all that are desolate.' At this crisis a gendarme stated to the committee, that the *sœur de la charité* had, to his knowledge, nursed and restored to health many of the brave defenders of the country who had been wounded in battle." The curé and his sister were released after a severe reprimand.

"Thank God! thank God! they are safe!" an ex-

clamation which now seemed to be so natural that it neither created surprise nor animadversion.

We resumed our journey next morning, not without earnest remonstrances on the part of my friend against my imprudence, and repeated cautions to be more upon my guard. Nothing of importance occurred till our arrival at Abbeville. We passed the gates without examination or suspicion, and took up our quarters at a cabaret on the brow of the hill, on the other side of Abbeville. This was the limit of my protector's journey. Here we were to part. The most perilous part of my journey remained. It may well be conceived, that these gloomy thoughts gave additional bitterness to the last night I was to pass with my good and kind friend. He attempted to calm and comfort me, by opening the prospect of happier days. He would not but believe that Providence, which had hitherto preserved me, would still watch over me in the dark hour of calamity and danger. We shall meet again at his home at Luzarches, and be present at Nannette's wedding.

Here, as at Amiens, a great number of persons were assembled, mostly consisting of travellers and carriers between the different towns. There were, however, three or four who appeared to be otherwise employed. Hard and weatherbeaten in their appearance, rough and boisterous in their manners, without, however, being offensive, they used few but sea terms and phrases, and made no secret of their occupation, which was that of carrying on a

contraband trade between England and France. They had been to Abbeville and Amiens with English cutlery and drugs, and were about to take to England a cargo of brandies and tobacco. Their vessel was at St. Vallery, a port about five leagues from Abbeville. My friend listened to them with the greatest interest, encouraged them to dwell upon their exploits, and, by the aid of an additional bottle or two of wine, gained their entire confidence and good opinion. Turning towards me on a sudden, he inveighed against me as a restless discontented fellow, who, not satisfied with the safe and quiet life of a carrier, was always talking of the superiority of a sea life, boasting that though there was more danger, there was more glory, and that the peril was more than balanced by the profit. Such idle notions, he said, he should be glad if they would assist him in curing. Not they, indeed! they liked me the better for them, for they showed a daring and generous spirit which they would much rather encourage than check. This was the point to which my friend wished to lead them. Would they take me a trip with them, which, he was sure, would effectually put an end to all my seafaring inclinations? They should have one hundred francs, which would defray my expenses out and home, and enable them to bring me back to Abbeville. The bargain was soon struck, a fresh bottle ordered, and it was settled that, as soon as day dawned, we should set off for St. Vallery, where they would arrive time enough to put to sea in the

evening, and run over to the coast of Kent during the night. My friend and myself now retired to take a few hours' rest before my departure. And we were now to part! It was a bitter moment, but I struggled against it as well as I could ; and whilst he hoped for and anticipated my escape from France, I prayed that his humanity might not expose him to danger. I charged him with my warmest thanks to his wife and daughter, and entreated him, for letters were unsafe, to convey to the good curé and his sister verbal assurances of my safety.

My new companions were sufficiently attentive to me, and, during our journey to St. Vallery, recounted the adventures they had met with, and the *hair-breadth escapes* which gave such an interest and charm to their occupation. Well acquainted with every road, they took the most un-frequented one, to avoid falling in with any of the douaniers who patrolled the coast. They had dépôts in solitary farm-houses, or in rocky caves. Signals were made both day and night to warn them of danger ; and no expeditions were hazarded, nor runs attempted, but in the darkest nights.

We reached a lone house about half-a-mile from the shore in the evening. We did not venture to enter it till one of my companions had made a signal, which was quickly answered. We then proceeded through a passage, and, descending by a trap-door, were admitted into a large and comfortable kitchen : there were two young men in it and a mother and her two daughters. My history was told in a

few words, and we lost no time in making preparations for our departure. A boat was waiting for us, into which we jumped and pulled away for the vessel, which was lying-to about half-a-mile off. The night was so dark that I wondered at their being able to find her, but upon a light being shown from the boat it was answered by a light from the vessel. We soon reached her, got on board with some fresh packages, hoisted in the boat, and made sail.

The night was propitious, the wind strong and steady, and we made the coast of Kent long before daybreak. Standing off and on for about half-an-hour, we saw a signal from a headland, and were thus assured that all was safe. We pushed on for the shore immediately and began to unload our cargo without loss of time. I went in the first boat, and there was every prospect of our running the whole cargo safely, when a gun was fired, followed quickly by another ; this was the signal of danger. Hurrying back instantly to their boats, the men jumped in, pulled away for the vessel, and spread all sail for the opposite coast, leaving me on the beach.

It was so dark, that, in total ignorance of the road, I resolved to walk the beach till daylight. I then found myself near a town, and congratulated myself on the termination of my dangers, and my escape from France. I entered the first cabaret I came to, and eagerly called for food ; a stare of surprise was the only answer, and two men immediately left the house. Food, however, on my laying a piece of gold upon the table, was quickly furnished me ; and

whilst I was thus engaged, three soldiers entered with fixed bayonets, and, placing me between them, marched off with me to the mayor. I was there closely interrogated, as to my home, occupation, business, and the manner in which I had left France and landed in England without a passport.

I was exposed to the suspicion of being an agent of the Jacobins. I rejected it with disdain: they were my persecutors, and the objects of my deadliest hatred. Being asked for my papers, I replied that as my object was to escape, papers would have been dangerous; I had only a quantity of gold, which I produced, to the amount of 150 louis d'or; these were sealed up, and it was finally resolved that I should be sent to the Secretary of State's office, in the custody of two officers. This was immediately carried into effect, and yet were not my feelings those of fear or anger. I felt no fear. I was not in any real danger, for innocence lived under the safeguard of the laws; accusation must be supported by evidence, and guilt must be proved by other means than the mere charge of a denunciator. The courts were here real courts of justice, not revolutionary tribunals.

The day after my arrival in London I was carried before one of the secretaries of state. He was attended only by his private secretary. After reading the letter from the mayor, containing the particulars of my arrest and examination, he addressed me in French. He remarked that the answers I had given to the mayor were all general, and that I had studiously avoided entering into any details. The

justice of this remark I admitted at once, and added, as my reason, that the account of my examination might have been published, in which case the safety of innocent persons would have been compromised, and the lives of those who had enabled me to preserve mine would have been endangered. At present, however, when there was no likelihood of such publicity, I was willing and even anxious to enter into the fullest explanation. I began my narrative with an account of my father's early struggles after the failure of the last effort of the Stuarts. I traced his career from that period to the French revolution; his subsequent differences with his partner; the treachery of the latter, and the arrest, trial, and death of both my parents; my consequent misery and illness; my escape from Paris; and, finally, my debarkation from a smuggling vessel on the English coast. I remarked with pleasure that his Excellency listened to my statement with that kind of attention which seemed to imply that he gave credit to it. After I had finished, he addressed a few words to his secretary, who laid before him a bundle of printed papers, which he examined with attention, and apparently with satisfaction, for he complimented me upon my candour, and pitied me for the miseries and the dangers to which I had been so undeservedly exposed. In England I need not apprehend such treatment. But what were my projects and intentions? I replied that I had hitherto thought of nothing but effecting my escape, but that, having been brought up as a merchant, I trusted I

should find some mercantile employment in this vast commercial metropolis.

And thus I had fulfilled the last injunction of my parents! and might they not still watch over their child? There is a joy in the belief that we are yet the objects of solicitude to those whom death has taken from us, and that, however they may be prevented from mingling in or directing our sublunary concerns, they are still not debarred from all acquaintance with them. If the dead be sometimes suffered to appear again, as is the concurrent and unvaried belief of all ages, may we not suppose that they are also permitted to be acquainted with the events which occur in the lives of those from whom they have been separated? The mind outlives the tenement it inhabited, the soul survives the body; yet does it at once lose all recollection of earthly events, all consciousness of its former abode? These are questions which no man can answer. Still let us cling to the belief (it is surely a harmless, and may be a virtuous one) that there is yet some link and correspondence between the living and the dead; and that, as the minds of the living have a constant recollection of the dead, the souls of the dead may still have a consciousness or knowledge of the actions of the living. In its sleeping state, the body is as though it were dead; but the mind is still active: it treads the path, it traces the progress of events long past; it converts the past into the present, holds converse with the earliest objects of its care and its affection, recollects the

features of friends now mouldering in the tomb, renews the pleasures of former days in all their freshness, and takes an active part in scenes, though all the actors have long since disappeared from the stage.

Though I had effected my escape, and had thus preserved my life, the means of living were yet to be provided, and here I encountered difficulties which I was far from expecting. Yet they are common to all who, driven from their own country, have to carve the means of subsistence in a foreign one, without friends or acquaintance, introduction or protection. So many of my unfortunate countrymen were in London, that every situation which I could have undertaken was already filled. Many who had once large domains and great riches were glad to earn a scanty livelihood by engaging as assistants in the public schools. One, a duke, devoted his whole day to the copying of music; another, of higher rank, of which he has since proved himself so unworthy, taught the first rudiments of mathematics, and thus kept himself from absolute want. Meanwhile, my small means were becoming less and less, and I began to entertain the gloomiest apprehensions of the future, when, as a forlorn hope, I resolved to make my situation known to a mercantile house for which I recollect my father had executed one or two commissions. My first interview with the partners was not propitious; but the illness of one of the clerks soon after my first application created a vacancy, and I was engaged as junior clerk. In this situation, with-

out any incident of importance, I remained till the preliminaries of peace were signed in 1801. The house were then desirous of extending their connexions in France, and I was selected to carry their intentions into effect.

With what different feelings I returned to France ! I left it in difficulty and danger : I returned in comfort and safety. I was then without home, without friends : I had now a station in society, and a character which had gained me confidence and credit. It would have been a journey of unqualified pleasure had not the marks of the revolution so frequently obtruded themselves in ruined, desolate, and deserted châteaux. Where now were their former proprietors ? Some had perished on the scaffold, others had emigrated. The scenes of their former enjoyment were to know them no more. The beautiful, and the gay, and the noble, had vanished from the land, and the raven croaked from the battlements, and the fox and the wolf usurped the hall which had once witnessed the triumphs of the tournament, and displayed the pomp and the power of the lord and his vassals. Few spectacles are more calculated to create melancholy emotions than the ruins of ancient buildings, and the decay of ancient families, even when they may have been the slow work of time. But here the feeling was deeper ; for man had forestalled the march of time, and devoted to premature destruction the château and its lord,— the building which had been the scene of gallant deeds, and the family which it had sheltered for a thousand years.

My first object, after my arrival at Paris, was to ascertain the fate of the good priest and his sister. I had not received any tidings from them since my departure, nor dared I write to them during the dark and troubled times which preceded the peace. The good priest was still living, though in extreme old age. The *sœur de la charité* had gone to receive, in another world the reward of her pure and pious conduct in this. They had been furnished, however, with the intelligence of my escape by the good carrier of Luzarches. The place of the *sœur de la charité* was supplied by the curé's niece, the daughter of a sister whose husband had fallen on the field of battle, and whom she survived only a month. Her only child, then about eight years of age, was left to the care of her uncle.

My second visit was to Luzarches. In what a different guise and garb did I approach it this second time! Yet I know not why our feelings, in returning to any dear spot after a long absence, are always of a mixed nature. There is joy, but there is also fear: and the delight, instead of being pure and unmixed, is alloyed with apprehensions and prognostications of evil. We can hardly think that the interval of our absence has been unmarked by some calamity, and we half expect that our first greeting will be accompanied by some unwelcome tidings. Death may have diminished the number of our friends, or absence chilled the warmth of their affection.

I determined not to announce myself at once, for I sup-

posed that eight years had made a considerable change in my features and appearance. I entered the kitchen of the cabaret as a stranger desirous of refreshment. There were the mother and daughter; the mother little altered, the daughter rather more *embonpoint*. But their kindness and activity were undiminished, and they bestirred themselves with the same zeal which they last displayed under circumstances very different indeed from the present. I expressed a wish to take my dinner with the family rather than alone, and whilst they were employed in getting it ready, I directed my conversation to the events which had occurred in the earlier part of the revolution. I spoke of a friend whom I had left in England, and who had made his escape during the reign of terror by the assistance of some peasants who had given him shelter. I touched upon the misery which had involved so many families in ruin, and was delighted to find, from a burst of gratitude for the goodness of Providence, that her own family had escaped the storm. The son, indeed, had been compelled by the conscription to enter the army; but he had risen to the rank of serjeant, and, as peace existed, had obtained leave of absence to visit his parents; whilst Nannette's lover, who had also been a soldier, had obtained his discharge, and was to be married to her as soon as the son arrived.

The carrier and Nannette entered as my hostess was concluding her little family history, and we sate down to dinner. Still preserving my incognito, I chatted with

Nannette about the wedding, soliciting her permission to be present. "It is too much honour for the like of us," said the mother; "but there is one, who, if he be yet alive, and knew of the wedding, would have been here, I am sure, for he promised faithfully, and we have all reason to wish it, for it is to him Nannette owes her dowry." "Aye, good wife," said the honest carrier, "and who knows but he may? stranger things have come to pass. You recollect the dream I told you of last Saturday morning, and dreams of a Saturday morning, sir, they say, very often come true. Well, sir, I dreamed that as we were going to church, all in our wedding dresses,—wife, Nannette, Robin, and Guillaume,—who should be standing at the church door but the gentleman himself; and he laid hold, instantly, of Nannette's hand, and led her into the church." "Hold your nonsense, husband," said the wife; "how should he be here, for he does not know when it is to take place. But he has the best right to be if he is alive, and God send he may be as happy as he has helped to make us." A shade of sorrow clouded, for a moment, the countenance of each, which the mother at length dissipated, by turning the conversation upon Nannette's *dot*. She then related the circumstances which had attended my first visit; the gold I had given her and Nannette had been employed in a small way of commerce, and so successfully, that it had produced sufficient, with her lover's fortune, to stock a small farm in the neighbourhood.

“It is odd,” I said, “that a similar adventure should have happened to me.” They were all attention. “I was once travelling, and put up at a cabaret so like this, in every respect, that I could almost believe it to be the same. The family consisted of a husband and wife, a son and daughter. There was some talk, too, of a wedding; but I was ill, for I had suffered much, and remember nothing so well as the humanity of the good mother, who, fearing I might be in want, placed a small sum of money in my hands, which I have never parted with, in the hope I might see her once again.” I took from a small purse the two six-franc pieces she had given me. “These are the identical pieces of money; you may remember them, though you have forgotten me.” Up jumped the whole family—it was who should be the first to embrace me. The mother scolded herself for not having recognized me; the father held up his hands in astonishment that he should not at once have known the companion with whom he had travelled for so many days; Nannette cried and laughed at the same moment,—she cried lest I should think her ungrateful, and laughed at my having returned so *à propos*. It was some time before we could descend to a reasonable state of feeling and conversation. Then came enquiries into the events that had occurred after my separation from the carrier at the cabaret beyond Abbeville. These I recounted in all their details, exciting, as I proceeded, the different feelings of pity, surprise, and pleasure, and finally concluding with

thanks to the Almighty for having preserved me amidst so many perils. Of all the evenings I ever spent, this was one of the happiest. Nannette's brother and her lover arrived in the course of the evening, and on the second day after my arrival the wedding was celebrated.

From this scene of domestic felicity more active duties recalled me, and the establishment of commercial relations left me little leisure for any other pursuit. What time I could spare was devoted to the good priest, whose declining years I endeavoured to soothe. In this labour of love I was assisted by the niece, about eighteen years of age, and eminently endowed with every charm that could ensure affection, and every virtue that could command respect. It was scarcely possible to be in her company without loving her: hence the feeling of admiration with which I first beheld her was soon mixed with tenderer sentiments, and my happiness was at length completed by the confession, on her part, of a mutual passion.

The health of the good curé had been declining for some months, and it was obvious that the final scene was rapidly approaching. To him it approached without exciting either dread or sorrow. He had long contemplated it; and if a whole life spent in virtuous actions may fit a man for that world which is to come, who had rendered himself more worthy of it than the curé? If he felt any uneasiness, it was at his separation from us, who had become the objects of his fondest affection. It was in one of

those moments in which he was expressing his deep anxiety for his niece, that I ventured to disclose our mutual passion, and to invoke his consent and blessing upon our union. A sudden gleam of pleasure brightened his features. He clasped his hands in prayer over our heads, and exclaiming, "Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me!" laid his head calmly on his pillow and expired.

In a few weeks after his death I was married to Mathilde. In the meantime the war had been renewed, and all intercourse with England, and all ideas of establishing a commercial correspondence with the English house, were abandoned. But having established commercial relations with several French houses, I was enabled to enter upon business on my own account. It prospered beyond my expectations; and years glided away with Mathilde in happiness and ease. The consular power passed away; the imperial dignity, raised to such a height of splendour only to have a more fatal fall,—

"—— tolluntur in altum,
Ut lapsu graviore cadant."—CLAUDIAN.

had been destroyed; the old dynasty had been restored, but, without an effort in its favour, had been, ere a year had elapsed, driven again into exile. The island prisoner had returned a conqueror; and, after plunging France into fresh calamities, had disappeared altogether from the stage. Again had the old family taken possession of the throne without opposition, and, to a superficial observer, the tran-

quillity of the kingdom seemed at length to be secured. In none of these changes did I take any part. I was disgusted with political intrigues and parties, contented with being a calm observer, whose opinions no one was anxious to ascertain, and who was generally believed to be wholly engrossed in the sordid pursuit of riches. To me the whole frame and structure of society, as well as the French character, seemed to be altogether altered. That levity and passiveness of submission which existed before the revolution had been exchanged for a stubbornness and constant desire of change. A free constitution might have been established at the outset of the revolution under a good and pious monarch ;—

“—— nunquam libertas gratior extat,
Quam sub rege pio ;”

but the golden opportunity was lost. The king was sacrificed, and his mild and merciful sway replaced by the most brutal and bloody tyranny that ever cursed the earth. Every successive alteration, every new constitution, changed as frequently as the seasons, and, scarcely put in motion before it was consigned to destruction, kept the people as far from any system of real liberty as they had been before the revolution. Jacobins succeeded Girondists ; the despotism of clubs was exchanged for the tawdry tinsel of the Directory, whose tyranny, though more disguised, was not less effectual and extensive. The Directory were removed to make room for the consular power ; the consular power

yielded to the imperial dignity ; and the imperial dignity achieved its own destruction by its own excesses. A quarter of a century had thus elapsed, and France was as remote from real freedom as she was at the commencement of it. She had songs and speeches, stirring music and rounded phrases ; but this was all mere “ mouth honour.”

The constitution was no living principle, it had no vital existence, it afforded no protection, it interposed no obstacle to the abuse of power ; it was to true freedom what the shrunk and shapeless skeleton is to the living man. There seems in my countrymen to be always a conviction that to be free it is only necessary to will it ; that a constitution is nothing more than an affair of architecture—that it may be built up with as much facility, beauty, and solidity as the palace or the temple, which is the work of man's hands, and the edifice of his own creation. They think that obedience must be the immediate consequence of command, and that when they say “ Let there be freedom,” there must be freedom. They will have to learn (but the time is not yet come) that a good constitution is not the business of a moment, nor the production of one man, however wise ; that it is the slow growth of ages ; that it must be congenial to the soil, or it will never strike its roots deeply and widely ; it must be assisted by fortunate conjunctures, and avail itself of favourable opportunities ; yield often to the prejudices of the people, and partake of the imperfections of our nature ; that it must be won by many a struggle,

and fought for in many a field; that it must have a due balance of powers, which shall keep the monarchical from encroaching upon the aristocratical and democratical branches, and restrain the latter from encroaching upon the monarchical. Never was the ignorance or the indifference to the true principles of freedom, which can never be separated from moral and religious principles, so apparent as at the return of Bonaparte from Elba. The people knew that from him no system favourable to liberty could be expected, they were certain that his desperate attempt would involve the country in fresh and unprofitable warfare, that blood and treasure would be lavished in vain, and that he would leave to the powers of Europe a legal claim to exact the amplest indemnity. It is to him alone that France owes the heavy contributions that were levied upon her, the second conquest of her capital, the military possession of her territory by foreign troops, and the loss, so painful to her vanity, of all those trophies of victory, all those works of art and genius, which had rendered her capital the envy and admiration of the world. All these treasures might have remained at Paris but for the last mad effort of Bonaparte. Yet the people express no indignation, impute no blame to him; their whole rage is directed against those, who, in removing them, exercised the same right of conquest with themselves, but exercised it in a more equitable manner, by restoring them to their original possessors.

Unaffected by any of these political events, my life glided

on smoothly and happily. Our only son was the object of all our tenderness and care, and amply he repaid it by his filial duty and affection, until he had completed his twentieth year. "Oh Théodore!—my son!—my beautiful!—my brave! that the wound which destroyed our domestic peace should have been inflicted by thee! But thou art gone! and may thy offence be forgiven by thy heavenly Father as it has been forgiven by thy earthly one!"

My dear boy had one failing,—the failing of a too yielding disposition, which made him unwilling to refuse compliance with any request, lest his refusal should give pain. Surely of all failings this is the most dangerous! It was this which induced him to accompany an intimate acquaintance to the gaming table, after having vainly dissuaded him from frequenting it.

The progress and termination of his short but fatal career, may be traced in the fragments which he left behind him.

FRAGMENT THE FIRST.

"For the first time, and I trust for the last, I have accompanied Théodolphe to Frascati's. What a scene! To see the human countenance so disfigured, every feature exhibiting the most intense anxiety, agony succeeding exultation, hope giving place to despair; the savings of industry, the means of subsistence, all staked on the turn of a card or the cast of a die; the son beggaring his father, the father

ruining his children; home, reputation, domestic ties, staked and sacrificed! Take a single being of the group: watch that wretched victim whose lips are turning alternately pale and red. How they quiver as he watches the progress of the deal! what drops of perspiration burst from every pore of his face! how his hands are clenched, as if he longed to bury his nails in the flesh! how he starts as the dealer proclaims the event! what execrations over his loss! what desperate madness of perseverance! He has one more stake—it is his last. He trembles as he risks it; he seems half inclined to snatch it back:—it is but the prudence of a moment; he leaves it abruptly to its fate, and it is gone for ever. That hollow groan! it is heaved up from the inmost recesses of a bursting heart; he staggers from the fatal scene, and, as he dashes himself into some solitary seat, the ruined gamester determines upon suicide!"

Who could have suspected that he who felt such horror and disgust, would himself become the victim he had so feelingly and faithfully portrayed?

FRAGMENT THE SECOND.

"I have been with Théodolphe a second time. He had been successful, and, according to the wise motto of the gamester, he ought to follow up his luck. Experience, the certainty of eventual loss, and, possibly, ruin, do not deter

anyone ; all rush on with the same madness. The rooms were crowded ; the gamesters as numerous and as desperate as before. Théodolphe plunged at once into the thickest of the contest, whilst I watched the different parties, and marked the alternations of the game. Théodolphe was again fortunate, and, probably, it was this circumstance that enabled me to contemplate the scene with less horror and disgust than at first."

FRAGMENT THE THIRD.

"Théodolphe's success has overcome my reluctance, and I have been persuaded to play. Could I have believed this possible ! But why did I render it possible ? Ought I not to have fled from this earthly pandemonium ? What opinion have I not expressed of the victims of this hateful passion !—Bad parents—bad husbands—bad sons ! Bad sons !—let me not dwell on that !"

During all this time, neither his mother nor I had the least suspicion of what was going on. There was the same regularity and punctuality in the counting-house, the same filial affection ; but he seemed paler and thinner, which his mother imputed to too close an application to business, and she pressed him to mix more in society.

FRAGMENT THE FOURTH.

“Madman! I have broken my oath not to risk a large sum! But I had been so repeatedly unfortunate, that I thought fortune might at last declare in my favour. So thought Théodolphe; and I quadrupled my stakes. Five thousand francs might be doubled, and trebled, and the *noir* might have a run—and all would be well! Well! The dreams of idiots and drivellers! The turn was still against me. I lost all temper—all prudence. In desperation I doubled the stake and lost; doubled it again, and lost again; exhausted all my resources; borrowed as long as I was able; and, finally, left off with the loss of 50,000 francs! What is to be done?”

FRAGMENT THE FIFTH.

“I am the veriest wretch that breathes the breath of life! Hypocrite! how hast thou deceived thy parents! Parricide! how hast thou murdered all their hopes! Robber! how hast thou plundered thy father's hoards! Fraudulent debtor! how art thou to repay the sums thou hast borrowed! Look back I dare not. I dare not stand still. I must on—on! Desperation alone can extricate me! Extricate me? Aye, and ruin me past hope! But on—on! No reflection! All must be risked! I have seized the sums that were to take up our commercial bills! In three days they will be due! Three days! And what then?—no matter! no matter! Salvation or ruin!”

FRAGMENT THE LAST.

"It is accomplished ! All is lost ! Ruin and disgrace have overtaken me. Peace of mind,—good home,—all are gone. I have but one task left : one path—and it leads to—

"Father !—Mother !—pardon ! No ; you cannot pardon me ! 'Father, which art in heaven,' dare I implore Thee to look with mercy upon such a sinner ?

"Oh, good and beloved parents, bless you ! bless you ! In a few minutes—."

Poor child ! It is probable that as soon as he had finished the last fragment he swallowed the fatal draught. My boy ! my boy !

In the morning we missed him at our usual breakfast hour. He came not—he sent not—as he would have done had he gone out upon business. He might be unwell. Had any one been into his chamber ? I went there myself. There he lay, dressed as he had been during the day, pale and cold ; but dead ! dead ! In one hand he grasped a locket with his mother's hair ; in the other he held the fatal manuscript.

What became of me I know not—a sudden faintness came over me—my sight grew dim. I recollect nothing ; and in this senseless state I remained for hours. But over the agony of parents deprived of their only hope, and so deprived, let me draw a veil.

It was not till some time afterwards that I was acquainted with the contents of those harrowing fragments. A kind friend had concealed them from both of us: he had taken my affairs into his own hands, paid my acceptances, and carried on my mercantile correspondence.

Upon my poor Mathilde the death of our child operated more fatally. The first tidings neither produced sigh, nor tear, nor word. It seemed as if she had been stunned by a sudden blow, which had deprived her of consciousness and speech. The eyes assumed a strange unnatural look: at times wild and wandering; at others fixed intently upon some external object. She did not speak for three days; seemed insensible to everything about her; but remained the whole time in our son's chamber. On the fourth day the body was to be laid in the coffin for interment, and we tried to withdraw her from the sad scene. But it was in vain; and the physician at last advised that she should be present, as the sight might give a different turn to her feelings, and rouse her to speech or tears. As the assistants raised the body gently, she gasped for breath, her lips quivered, she put aside the arm of one of the men, and screamed, "Théodore! your mother! your mother!" The words unlocked at once the source of tears, and she wept bitterly and long. Then she hung over the coffin and would not be moved from it, looking upon the features of the dead as if she expected to hear him speak and move. "Théodore! speak to me! You used to love me!" On a sudden, the

truth burst upon her mind. “He’s dead ! I know it ! Oh, he will speak no more ! Never ! never ! never !” She immediately became insensible, and whilst she remained so the coffin was closed and removed for interment. But she recovered time enough to rush out of the room and follow the mournful procession, which she reached as they were lowering the coffin into the grave. Her shrieks were piercing. She would have thrown herself into the grave. She would not have him buried—he should be removed home. “Don’t send him from me !—I will watch by him. Théodore ! my own Théodore ! Let me have one kiss of him—one last—last—kiss ! Indeed, indeed, he loved me so dearly !” She became now too feeble to contend with the assistants, who bore her away ; and the grave of my son was closed for ever.

Her grief became less violent, but more settled and silent. She was fast following him to the tomb. Sleep did not refresh her—food did not nourish her—exercise did not strengthen her—she preferred being alone, and frequently retired to our dear boy’s chamber, where she would kneel by his bedside and lay her head upon the pillow which had been once pressed by his. The physician’s skill availed her nothing, and, as a last forlorn hope, change of scene was recommended. I resolved upon an immediate trial. I soon closed all my mercantile concerns : the only being whom they would have benefitted was gone. I had completed

every arrangement for our departure: the carriage even was at the gate; and I waited only for my Mathilde. She had gone to shed one more tear upon the pillow of her son. I found her on her knees;—but life was extinct. She had breathed her last sigh upon the pillow which had received his!

I remained only long enough to lay her dear remains by the side of our poor boy, and then set out a wretched solitary wanderer upon the face of the earth.

The world was all before me. But where was I to choose —where to find—

MY PLACE OF REST?

LEAF THE SECOND.

THE DEAF AND DUMB TWINS.



After visiting several parts of Germany, in quest of a habitation, I found out a retired spot not far from Hesse-Darmstadt, so retired, indeed, that few persons in the city, though only fifteen miles distance, ever visited, or even heard of it. There is no road through it to any town. It is a solitary heath bordered by forest trees, with a few cottages scattered irregularly over it; an old château and its woods are its limits on the western side; and at the entrance of the heath, as if placed by way of sentinel, stands a small inn.

My house is a low tenement, and when I hired it was much dilapidated. Its grounds had been sadly neglected, and were nearly filled with weeds. The last inhabitants had seen better days, but little of them was known beyond their names. They seldom stirred out in the day time,—were sometimes seen at night stealing through the garden to gather the few vegetables it produced, and to pick up some sticks for firing. At length they disappeared, and were heard of no more.

The situation of the house is pleasant; it has a southern

aspect, with a view of cultivated fields and distant hills and woods, dotted with the cottages of wood cutters and *gardes forestière*.

I have always had a strange propensity to dawdle and saunter about, to hang over the paling of a garden or a gate, and moralize over flowers and all the quiet beauties of nature; to contrast the silent progress of vegetation and the noiseless growth of the fruits of the earth, the calm and sweet aspect of fields and valleys, and mountains and woods, with the frivolous pursuits, the restless desires, the lust after wealth and honours, which mark the intercourse between man and man in crowded cities.

The landlord of the small inn to which I have alluded seemed, upon my first acquaintance with him, to be one of the most silent, if not sullen, of human beings; so slow in his movements, and so much attached to his meerschaum pipe, which was his constant companion by day, that I had no doubt he hung it over his pillow at night, that it might be ready to drop into his mouth the first thing in the morning. Nothing could exceed the dislike I felt towards him in the beginning. I tried all those modes of civility by which we attempt to ingratiate ourselves: I praised the cleanliness of his inn, the beauty of its situation, the neatness of his garden. A short and abrupt sentence was his only reply. At length he favoured me with a few words asking what my object was in coming among them. I replied that I had reasons for leaving my own country, and that I hoped to prove myself

a friendly neighbour. "Reasons!" he repeated, as if he suspected I could not give any good ones, and I saw plainly that he regarded me with increasing distrust. Despairing at length of rendering him more humane, I left him to his sullenness and suspicions. He had a wife whose character seemed in every respect the reverse of his: gentle in speech and quiet in manner, with a look which I find it difficult to describe; as it gave to her eyes an expression at once of grief and resignation, which at times was succeeded by a certain wildness and impatience, as if resignation had for a time lost its power. I frequently remarked that, when she looked at her husband, a deeper shade of melancholy overspread her countenance, as if she knew that he was struggling with a secret sorrow which he would fain hide from the world. There was evidently some deep grief, and this induced me to study their characters more closely, that I might be able, if not to remove, at least to lighten the load that weighed them down so heavily. I saw no children about the house, and at first persuaded myself that they had none, but I was at length undeceived by an event which, whilst it proved the error of my conjectures, let me at once into their history.

I had been wandering on the borders of the heath later than usual when, from a clump of oaks in a dell at a short distance, I heard an extraordinary noise. It was not a scream, but a hollow guttural sound, as if it proceeded from a person in the act of being strangled. It was short and

quick, and soon became fainter and fainter. I went always armed, not only with a stout stick, but with a brace of pocket pistols. I hastened to the spot, and beheld a young man struggling with two ruffians, one of whom was grasping his throat. I called out to the villains to desist, and advanced with a pistol in my hand. One of them immediately fired, but missed me. I returned his fire with more effect, for his right arm dropped as if the ball had shattered it. Exclaiming with an oath, that he was killed, he made a signal to the other ruffian, and they both fled.

Instead of pursuing them, I directed my attention to the young man. He lay quite exhausted on the ground, and to my repeated inquiries did not make the least reply. I felt his pulse; I examined his head; there was no wound, but his throat bore evident marks of the assassin's gripe. I raised him from the ground, and by degrees he recovered, but did not speak a word. Uttering a low and mournful sound, he clasped his hands together, as if in thanks, and, pointing to his mouth and ears, made a signal which explained to me that he was deaf and dumb. On a sudden I heard shouts in the distance, and saw lights glancing in different directions. "*Fritzer! mein Fritzer!*" My dumb companion turned to me with a joyful countenance. Presently I saw my landlord of the inn and his wife. No sooner did they catch a glimpse of Fritzer, the name of the dumb youth, than he flew into their arms; he then turned to me, drew me to his father and mother, and, falling on his knees

before me, made them comprehend that I had saved his life.

We returned to the inn, where I had to undergo a repetition of thanks and blessings, which I cut short by explaining the necessity of examining and applying some medicine to their son's throat. I found that the grasp of the ruffian must have been so determined that but for my intervention life would soon have been extinguished.

The father remained for some time in deep thought. He then inquired by signs of his son whether the men had robbed him, or attempted it. By a sign he made his father understand that no such attempt had been made, accompanying this information with a gesture which explained to us that they had dragged him into the plantation and fastened instantly upon his throat. This circumstance afforded matter for deep reflection. It was evident that murder, not robbery, was their intention. But why should Fritzer be the object of their vengeance, and why was he wandering alone at such an hour? "It is an hour," said the father, "at which he is never abroad. I do not suffer him to be on the heath at times when he might be exposed to the taunts and ill-usage of the village lads, who would make sport of his affliction. He walks with me in early morning, and by paths which are seldom frequented; the rest of the day he dedicates to reading and drawing." Fritzer, who seemed to have been lost in thought, now jumped up as if he had made some discovery; he felt in

this pocket, then in that, and at last drew out a scrap of paper in the shape of a note which he eagerly handed to his father.

• “FRITZER EBERSDORFF,—You are desired to go this evening to the clump of oaks on the edge of the heath, where your father will come to you. As he is engaged at present with the curé, he has desired a friend to write this in his name.”

The father and mother lifted up their hands in astonishment. The father had not written, nor caused to be written, any such note. Here, then, was proof of a plan for depriving the young man of his life. “But the object,” I asked, “what object was meant to be accomplished by the murder?” The father paused for some minutes, and after exchanging looks with his wife, began,—

“I have no right nor wish to conceal any part of our sad story from our benefactor. If he did not hesitate to risk his life for our son, his parents ought not from any false shame to forbear disclosing to him those events which have saddened theirs.

“I was one of the *gardes forestières* of Count Plauersfeldt, who resided at his château about five miles from the heath. As I was active and faithful in the discharge of my duty, and had discovered and defeated some attempts to injure the property of the count, he distinguished me by many proofs of kindness and approbation. I had become acquainted with the daughter of the former landlord of this

inn, and, with the count's consent, made proposals to her father, who, ascertaining the sentiments of his daughter, and proud of having been spoken to by the count, gave his consent to the marriage. We were accordingly married, and but for the calamity which befell us (not, thank God, from any crimes of our own), our happiness would have been nearly perfect." His wife, leaning her arm upon his shoulder, fixed her eyes upon him with much affection, as if to confirm the truth of his assertion. He pressed her hand warmly, and then proceeded. "I removed with my wife to the cottage which I occupied as *garde forestière*, and in a few months afterwards she became pregnant. It is not to be supposed that I had been a faithful servant to the count without having incurred the hatred of those whose designs I had thwarted. To such a pitch had it risen, that they determined upon taking away my life. I had been sent for one night by my father-in-law. It was the night fixed upon for my death; and, with the cowardice which marks the assassin, it was resolved that the murder should be committed after I had gone to bed, when I should be unarmed, and might be surprised in my sleep. It is easy to enter a cottage; for what has poverty to do with locks and bars? They got in without any one hearing them. My wife, who was within a short time of her delivery, had gone to bed. No one was in the cottage but herself. They stole gently up stairs, one holding a dark lanthorn and a dagger, the other armed with pistols. As they opened the bedroom

door, my wife, supposing I had returned, asked a question about her father. No reply was made, but they placed themselves on each side the bed, and one of them aiming a blow with his dagger, exclaimed, 'Louis, take that; you will trouble us no more.' The other ruffian, throwing suddenly the light of the lanthorn upon the bed, observed to his companion, with an oath, that Louis was not there. The dagger had only penetrated the pillow. The terror of my wife upon seeing the ruffians by her bedside may easily be conceived. She uttered one loud scream; but to the repeated demands to know where I was she did not reply a word; fear had struck her dumb. I had just reached our cottage when I heard the scream. I found the door open, and strange voices above. I made but one spring up the stairs, and, bursting into the room, saw my wife, as I thought, dead. The ruffians were hanging over her. I flew upon the nearest villain, and grasping him by the throat, tore him from the bedside and hurled him down stairs. The other, seeing the fate of his comrade, attempted to rush by me; but foiled in his attempt, he fired a pistol, which did no other damage than shattering the window. He then, by a sudden effort, extricated himself from my hold, and, darting down stairs, fled after his companion. By degrees my wife recovered, though she remained speechless for some hours. She could not, however, leave her bed, and in a short time was delivered of twins. But her fright had had a fatal effect upon them; they were born

deaf and dumb. A sad calamity this, but it behoved us to bear it with fortitude, and not to fail in our duty because our children would never delight us with their prattle in infancy, or cheer us with their conversation at a more advanced period of their lives. They grew up sweet and docile children, and, as if their common calamity linked them together more closely, they loved each other with the utmost affection. Knowing that they could not hold any intercourse with us by speech, they seemed more eager to be taught everything by which they could render themselves more useful. Thus they grew up, till at last we were enabled to bear the calamity with calmness and resignation. The count, who had known the circumstances under which the children were born, and the cause of that hatred which had exposed my life to danger, continued his favour towards me. My daughter Ella was one of the loveliest girls I ever beheld.” He paused for a few moments; nature was working too strongly within him. He attempted to check himself, but the effort was in vain; he actually groaned with anguish, whilst large drops of sweat stood upon his forehead. The wife remained fixed to her seat, and silent, as if in secret prayer. The father, waving his hand towards her, made a strong effort to master his feelings, and at length continued—

“ She grew up the pride and delight of her parents; and the countess, who would sometimes honour our cottage with a visit, took great notice of her. At length she offered

to take her as her own immediate attendant. Grieved were we to part with her, sure enough, but we had to think what was to become of her should death deprive her of her parents; and thus, after much consultation, we accepted the countess's offer. Oh God ! that any consideration should have induced us to accept it ! But who could foresee the misery into which this step would plunge her ? Ella had just reached her sixteenth year, when we went with her to the château. It was painful enough for her parents to part with her—it was agony to her brother ; they had never been separated ; had worked together, read together, and had established certain signs, by which they could converse together. He was going to lose his other self, and to be left almost a solitary being in the world.

“ I had a strong presentiment of evil ; I had a weight and oppression upon my heart which every one, I suppose, has felt before the visitation of some great calamity. We cannot divine the cause, nor the quarter from whence it is to proceed, nor its extent, nor the manner of its operation, nor why it should come at all ; we only feel that it will come.

“ Yet everything seemed to assure us that our Ella could not be in safer hands. The count and countess were amiable and virtuous, and Ella was treated with the greatest kindness. Months passed on without any event of importance ; but still, still, I could not shake off the load which weighed upon me.

“ The family of the count consisted of two sons, who

were in the army, and who were making a campaign in the Austrian service, when my daughter was taken into that of the countess. At the end of a year they returned, and with them an officer who —”

The father was forced to leave off abruptly from exhaustion, and to defer the continuation of his narrative till the following evening.

“The sons of Count Plauerfeldt brought with them an officer who had made the campaign with them, and was come to spend a few months at the château. He was the son of the Baron de Lauerstadt, a noble family in Saxony.

“Ella, who had gained upon the affections of the countess by the grace and gentleness of her manners, was treated more as a companion than a servant; and this kindness became more marked after a dangerous illness, through which Ella had nursed her with the utmost care, and until her own health began perceptibly to suffer. The medical attendant upon the countess ordered her to take a daily walk in the gardens and grounds of the château. It was in one of these walks that she was observed by Lauerstadt. He had been informed that there was such a person in the countess's train, but had never seen her. He was struck with admiration at the sight of so graceful and lovely a woman, and addressed her with much seeming respect. The next day, and the next, and the next, he was found in the walk she frequented, and was her constant companion. He taught her also the method of conversing with him by the

aid of the fingers. These daily attentions could not fail of producing their effect upon a young and innocent girl, and Lauerstadt was not slow in discovering it. He loved her, but it was not that love which combines its own gratification with the happiness of its object; it was a sensual and selfish passion. Hers, on the contrary, was of that tender and virtuous kind which truly has for its end the happiness of its object, and in which her own is inseparably bound up. It was long, however, before she gave him the advantage which a woman always affords when her affection becomes known. The disparity between their rank in life was so great that she dared not indulge the hope that his family would consent to such a marriage; and, all innocence herself, she did not suppose that any other than virtuous intentions could enter into the heart of the baron. But I will not dwell upon the arts he employed, and the projects he formed to seduce her from the path of virtue. Failing, however, in these, he at last proffered her marriage. She replied, by the signs which he had taught her, that the consent of both their parents must be obtained. Lauerstadt rejected the suggestion at once: his parents would never consent to the marriage, which must be concealed from them, and never acknowledged till after their death;—nay, the same concealment must be adopted towards her own parents; and to this they must mutually and solemnly pledge themselves.

“For some time my poor child would not listen to such

a proposal;—would to God that she had persisted in that virtuous resolution ! But, pressed by entreaties constantly urged by the man she loved, and affected by the grief he pretended to feel, and moved, moreover, by his pathetic declaration that he might soon be called into active service, and grow careless of life if he were to depart without calling her his wife, he wrung from her a reluctant consent to their union, accompanied by a condition that her brother should be present at the ceremony.

“The château had its chapel for the celebration of religious ceremonies, and there, in the presence of her brother and one of the baron’s servants, she was—married !

“After the marriage had been celebrated, the priest gave Fritzer secretly a certificate, and by signs made him understand that it must be kept with the utmost care.

“In about seven months afterwards Lauerstadt left the château, under the pretext of his father’s illness, but with the promise of returning as soon as his recovery would permit of it. Ella was then pregnant. The delicacy and distress of her situation were extreme ; her solemn oath bound her to secrecy, but she wrote to Lauerstadt imploring him to release her from so much of it as bound her not to divulge it to her own parents. He took no notice of her letter. In a subsequent one she repeated her request in the most moving terms: he was as regardless of this as of the previous one. It would seem as if her distress could not have been susceptible of aggravation, but it was absolute happiness when contrasted

with the event which followed her last letter to the baron. It was a letter from him, but not in answer to hers, which he did not even notice. He assured her that he still loved her with the truest affection; that her happiness should always be his peculiar care; that his parents were urging him in the strongest manner to marry a noble lady, the only daughter of the late Count Pahlen; that, however averse he was to such a union, he feared he should not be able to withstand the intercessions of both families; that the ceremony which had passed between them was only a pretended marriage, not having been solemnized according to the form of the church, nor celebrated by a priest: it was therefore null and void.

“Conceive—no; you cannot conceive—the feelings of my poor child upon the perusal of a letter so cruel and unexpected. She fell to the ground as if death had struck her, and in that situation was found by the countess. The fatal letter lay beside her, and its contents sufficiently explained the cause. With the most considerate humanity the countess employed herself in restoring her to her senses, and would not call in any assistance lest the secret should transpire: but she sent for my wife and me.

“I pass over, for I cannot, I cannot describe, the grief, the agony that seized us. We removed our poor child, whose reason had become impaired, and who for weeks was unconscious of her situation. At length the period of her delivery arrived, and she was restored to consciousness and to misery. The infant was put out to nurse, for Ella could not

rear it, and we returned to our cottage; but not to that peace and happiness which once had blessed it.

“My wife’s father died soon afterwards, and bequeathed us this inn; but the company and conversation of the persons who frequented it were too much for the spirit of my poor broken-hearted child, and she took up her abode with the nurse and her infant.

“In this manner two years elapsed. We heard of the Baron Lauerstadt’s marriage, but carefully concealed it from Ella, though his barbarous letter must, in a measure, have prepared her for it.

“This morning I was surprised by the arrival of a notary from Darmstadt with the information that the baron had been arrested on a charge of bigamy by the Count Pahlen, that the trial is to take place in a month, and that the evidence of Ella and her brother will be absolutely necessary. I know not what to think, and dare not indulge hope; but the orders of the criminal tribunal must at any rate be obeyed, and Ella and Fritzer must proceed in a few days to Darmstadt. How their evidence is to be given, deprived as they are of speech, I am unable to comprehend, but steps must be taken to find out an advocate who may watch over Ella’s interests and protect her character.”

As I knew that my landlord was unacquainted with legal proceedings, and was besides but little conversant in the ways of the world, I offered my services, which were readily and gratefully accepted. On my arrival at Darmstadt, I

procured an introduction to a young advocate of the highest promise, the nephew of the celebrated Schiller. I laid before him all the particulars of which the reader is informed. His first opinion was not favourable, even supposing that a legal marriage had been celebrated, for means might have been found to remove the priest, without whom every effort would be unavailing; but he seemed more inclined to fear that a pretended marriage had taken place, such instances of baseness not being rare. It was resolved however that we should open a communication with the advocate of Count Pahlen, whose case might be strengthened by the evidence with which we could furnish him. This was accordingly done. The manner of taking the evidence of the deaf and dumb sister and brother perplexed us; but we resolved to consult the director of the establishment for the deaf and dumb, who was a pupil of the Abbé Sicard. He soon took the deepest interest in the case: but we had only three weeks to make our arrangements. By the advice of M. de Montcalm, for that was his name, we sent for the brother and sister, and placed them under his care.

Ella and her brother arrived at Darmstadt with their father. I had never seen her, but the first glance was sufficient to convince me of the perfect truth and purity of her heart. I never beheld a countenance so calculated to excite love and admiration. The enthusiasm of the lover and the imagination of the poet accord to the objects of their adoration the beauty of angels: without either the enthu-

siasm of the one, or the imagination of the other, I must confess that she personified all that we conceive of such immortal beings. Her grief had been softened by piety and resignation, which gave to her features a touching interest utterly impossible to describe. You could not say her face was pale:—"Oh call it fair, not pale!" Her eyes were of the softest blue, and, before sorrow and tears had dimmed their lustre, must have been most expressive. Her figure, though slight, was not deficient in roundness; and if misery had not driven all joy and gladness from her heart, one might have expected to see her bound with all the grace and elasticity of a wood nymph.

Ella, who had been partially instructed by the baron in the art of communicating her ideas by the fingers, made rapid progress under the humane instruction of M. de Montcalm.

The day of trial arrived.

THE TRIAL.

Perhaps few trials have ever excited more interest; nor do I recollect above one or two more curious and important, even amongst the *causes célèbres*.

Count Pahlen had secured the talents of one of the most eminent advocates in Darmstadt, M. Carlsdorff. Baron Lauerstadt was defended by an advocate of equal eminence, M. de Florsberg. M. Schiller, our advocate, had had few opportunities of distinguishing himself, but those who were

most intimate with him knew that to great legal knowledge he added an intimate acquaintance with the classics, which had refined his taste, and given greater scope and animation to his genius ; his eloquence was so impassioned and earnest, that he appeared to be pleading his own cause rather than that of his client. With this he combined quickness of perception, great depth of reasoning, and a remarkable dexterity in weeding and clearing a cause of all extraneous and irrelevant matter.

The friends of the accuser and the accused were in court, formidable from their influence and rank ; whilst on our side there were the advocate Schiller, M. de Montcalm, the father and his deaf and dumb children, and myself.

As soon as the three judges entered the court, the baron was placed at the bar. It was to us a moment of fearful interest on account of Ella. I had placed her so that she could not immediately see any person entering the court from that side. The baron cast a haughty glance at the assembled multitude, affected an air of carelessness and indifference, and recognizing with a look of familiarity some of his friends, surveyed the different groups more particularly, till at length he caught a view of his hapless victim. There was no longer any haughtiness of look, or carelessness of manner ; his countenance became of an ashy paleness, and then as red as blood, his lips quivered, and his whole frame seemed convulsed. It was at this moment that Ella by a sudden turn first saw him.

The sight quite overpowered her. She clasped her hands in anguish, and fell senseless into her father's arms. I had foreseen this, and had provided the necessary remedies. But the business of the court was for a time suspended.

The chief judge opened the proceedings, confining himself to a dry statement of the nature of the process.

M. Carlsdorff then rose. Had it been midnight, without the presence of a human being in court, there could not have been a deeper and more awful silence.

M. CARLSDORFF.—“My lords, before I proceed, in the presence of this august tribunal, to lay before your lordships the facts of a case which has few parallels in the annals of crime, I must direct your attention to the scene which has just passed before us, and which, though it has created a temporary delay, has added a link to the chain of evidence which we did not expect. It is amongst the inscrutable ways of Providence to act sometimes by means apparently the most insignificant. Guilt may weave the most cunning web, surround itself with every artifice that shall shroud it from the eye of man, build up a fortress which it believes to be impregnable, and boast that it has baffled detection. Shallow contrivers! In an instant the gentlest breath, a word only whispered, the slightest touch, breaks the meshes of this curious web, drags every artifice into open day, and levels the impregnable fortress with the dust. A dream, a groan in sleep, a knife dropped by chance on the spot where a great crime has been committed, a foot-mark in the snow,

a spot of blood on the floor, have been the means of tracking the murderer to his cave, and of furnishing a clue to his detection. May we not hope that the scene we have just witnessed, slight as it may appear to be, will assist us in detecting the crime and the criminal, the murder and the murderer!"

M. DE FLORSBERG instantly rose. "Murder and murderer! I protest, my lords, against the use of expressions which may aggravate the public mind against my client, mislead the court, and impute a crime which is not in the indictment. Let me entreat my learned brother to descend from the lofty flights of fancy into the humbler region of fact, and to recollect that the charge against the baron is simply one of bigamy."

M. CARLSDORFF.—"Simply one of bigamy! I can easily pardon the indiscreet zeal of my learned friend, who is anxious that his client should not be suspected of being guilty of any crime but simply that of bigamy! But I retract not a sentence, not a word I have uttered. I will not qualify nor soften a single expression. My lords, the man who takes another's life is not the only murderer—perhaps not the cruellest. Poverty or despair may have armed him against his fellow-man. The fatal blow has been struck, and the agony may be momentary. But the man who, with the power which rank and wealth supply, and for the gratification of his own debasing lust, allures innocence from the paths of virtue, wins and abuses the affection of confiding

woman, and then leaves her as an object of contempt and scorn, a desolate and broken-hearted wanderer upon the face of the earth,—he is the cruellest of all murderers, for the death he causes is a slow and lingering one.

“ My lords, the eye, the look, sometimes open to us a view of the inmost recesses of the heart. When the prisoner came into court, his air was haughty, his demeanour careless. But no sooner does he fix his eyes in one direction than his manner changes, his face becomes alternately pale and red, his eyes quiver, and mental agitation shakes his whole frame. Do not all your hearts tell you what is the cause? Look at that ill-fated object!—at that countenance, so interesting in its grief, so beautiful in its desolation. You would hardly believe that this is the work of a human being, for you are good men! still less dare I expect you to credit the monstrous assertion that so lovely a girl should have been deserted! deserted too at the moment of her utmost need, in that hour of pain and peril when life is held by a thread, and the grave seems half open to receive its victim!

“ I fear that I am harrowing the feelings of all who hear me; I am sure I am wounding my own. I proceed therefore at once to a detail of facts, and a review of the evidence by which I hope to establish the charge against the prisoner.

“ Young Lauerstadt, after one of his campaigns, was received as the intimate friend of Count Plauerfeldt’s sons

at the château of Plauerfeldt. The countess, their mother, had taken into her service a young and innocent female, the daughter of one of his *gardes forestières*. Her close attention to the countess during her illness had impaired her health, and air and exercise were prescribed for her. In one of her walks in the gardens of the château it was her unhappy fate to meet the baron. An acquaintance commenced, and the baron, always on the watch for her, was her daily companion in her walks. At length he made an avowal of the affection with which she had inspired him.

“That the baron’s intentions where dishonourable ; that his wish was to gain possession of this innocent girl upon his own terms, cannot be doubted. But her virtue was more powerful than his arts, and eventually he offered her marriage.

“My lords, I am aware of the prejudices of rank, and that unequal marriages are generally regarded with disdain and dread both by the affluent and the noble. Hence those selfish and heartless betrayals which consign so many victims to a life of misery and shame ; and hence, too, it arises that palliations are so constantly advanced and admitted in extenuation of wrongs so cruelly inflicted and so lightly considered. Beauty and innocence, when allied to poverty, can offer but a feeble resistance to the accessories of wealth, rank, and passion. Love, in its purest form, seldom sits enthroned in the heart of the aristocrat when the object of his admiration is a poor, humble, and, it may be, beautiful girl. But love, in its carnal sense, reigns there supreme :

here it acquires the character of a brutal and debasing lust; a lust that sets at nought the claims of honour, decency, and pity, and suffers no impediment to stand between it and its gratification; a lust that must be satiated, even though woman's virtue, woman's happiness, and, possibly, woman's life, should be the sacrifice.

"As I said before, the man who takes another's life is not the *only* murderer. But to proceed. The marriage was celebrated in the chapel of the château, in the presence of the bride's brother and a domestic of the baron.

"A few months were passed—they were but few—in happiness. The baron then left the château under the pretext of his father's illness, and returned to it no more. Letter after letter was sent to him, urging the delicacy of his wife's situation, and imploring his return; but he never condescended a reply. He had obtained the object of his desires, and was impatient to throw his injured victim, 'like a loathsome weed' away. As the final act of his villainy, he addressed to her, on the eve of her confinement, the letter I hold in my hand, and which by permission of the court I will now read."

[The letter, of which I have already given the substance, was read to the court, and received with expressions of indignation and disgust.]

"My lords, I shall not occupy much more of your time. What the agony of this woman must have been at the receipt of such a letter, at such a moment, I will not attempt

to describe. The painter wisely draws a veil over the grief which he cannot pourtray. But Providence has ordained that sorrow, however great, is capable of mitigation. The wife, whose sanity had at first given way, was delivered of a male child, and was restored to her senses, and to the consciousness also of her desolate condition. The baron, meanwhile, celebrated his second marriage.

“Before, however, entering upon the evidence, it will be necessary to state some circumstances which I have avoided touching upon myself, because I am sure they will be urged with far greater force by my young friend near me, who, having made that part of the case more peculiarly his study, is more competent, and indeed has the better right, to discuss it.”

M. SCHILLER rose. “My lords, if I felt before that I had undertaken a task for which I am totally incompetent, I am sure that that feeling has been rendered doubly embarrassing by the compliment which closed the address of the learned advocate. *He* runs no risk of any diminution of *his* fame by any panegyric he may bestow upon others; for where can he fear or find a rival? How different is my case! An unknown individual, without experience, without any of those qualities which are so prominent in the learned advocate, with no other recommendation than the desire and the determination to do my duty fearlessly and conscientiously, I stand before you undeterred by the heavy responsibility of my position; but, at the same time,

with a full sense of the important results involved in this trial to all the parties concerned.

“ My lords, there are two features in this case which have rarely, if ever, been found in any other. The bride and her brother are deaf and dumb. God, who has given us the faculty of expressing our wants and wishes, and the power of holding converse with our fellow-men, has denied it to them. Unhappy fate! that bars them from the enjoyment of that social intercourse which alone makes life supportable in the midst of all its cares and troubles.

“ The common herd of sensualists would have shrunk from the thought of injuring a young creature so desolate and forlorn. That she could not speak her sorrow or proclaim her wrongs would have shaken the purpose of any one who had not calculated that it was that very want of speech which afforded an impunity to guilt, and would, most probably, shield it from discovery. Happily, my lords, the contrivances of the wicked are never so perfect as to defy detection. There is always some error in the conception, some fault or blemish in the execution; there is always some contingency which has not been foreseen, and against which no provision has been made. There is ever *a flaw in the indictment*, if I may use a technical expression, which disconcerts their calculations and defeats their designs. What a merciful boon, my lords, is this from the hand of Providence! It shows the impolicy as well as the wickedness of crime even in this life; and though we are sure that

guilt will meet with its punishment in another world, it is still consolatory to know that it seldom goes undetected or unpunished even in this.

“But if the dumb *cannot* speak, they are able to converse in a language which has been invented by one of those good men whose lives are devoted to the benefit of their fellow-creatures. Such a man was the Abbé Sicard; such a man is M. de Montcalm. Our difficulty, however, was as to the way by which the dumb wife and brother could give their evidence. It could not, of course, be *viva voce*; and the forms of the court do not admit of written evidence. M. Montcalm, however, soon removed all difficulty. They had been under his tuition, and he, being a sworn interpreter between the court and them, the ends of justice would thus be completely served.”

M. de Florsberg strongly objected to a course of proceeding which was not sanctioned by any law that could be found in the reports, nor by any precedent that could be produced from the records of the court. Here was a mode of taking evidence which the judges did not understand, and upon which, therefore, they could not give any decisive opinion. Where, too, was the power of cross-examination? Besides, the interpreter might be deficient in competency or in impartiality. He might suppress, or add, or misrepresent, without the possibility of detection.

M. SCHILLER.—“I will not undertake so needless a task as to defend M. de Montcalm from such an insinuation; but

I will suggest an easy mode by which the accuracy of the interpretation may be ascertained. Let any written question be placed before the witnesses without its having been seen by the interpreter, and let it be repeated to him by the finger alphabet. If he interpret it rightly, we shall be quite sure of his ability—I will not doubt his inclination—to convey the evidence correctly."

The judges coincided in opinion as to the difficulty and novelty of the point involved. But when the ends of justice require that a precedent shall be set, they must establish it. The interpreter being a man of known celebrity and character, the court admitted this mode of taking the evidence, not, however, without reluctance, and only from a conviction that no other mode for receiving it could be devised.

The decision of the judges gave general satisfaction.

M. CARLSDORFF.—"It now remains for me, my lords, to produce my evidence. I know that in doing so I must of necessity lacerate the feelings of one individual, for whose unhappy position I feel the profoundest sorrow. If the issue of this investigation should deprive the sister of Count Pahlen of those rights and of that name which she fondly thought she had secured in the sight of God and man, let it be some consolation to her that her sorrow is not the sorrow of the sinner; that she has fallen a victim to deceit and treachery, which no human foresight could have anticipated, and from which no prudence could

have secured her. Her virtue is as unsullied, and her purity as stainless, as when she plighted her faith at the altar, and thought that she was giving her heart and hand to the man whose heart and honour were as spotless as her own.

“Assuming the legality of the first marriage, the contraction of a second would neither release the baron from his obligations, nor lessen the amount of his guilt. He proffered marriage without intending to celebrate it according to the forms of religion. He profaned the altar by perjury; and inwardly resolved that the ceremony, being a mockery, should bind him no longer than suited his convenience and his lust. In both cases, I repeat, he stands alone in his guilt. Establish the first or the second marriage, declare which you will to be legal, the baron will still rest under the imputation of having basely deceived both of these hapless women. The guilt will all be his, whilst they will remain without taint or stain; both pure, both innocent, both objects of our highest respect, and, alas! of our deepest commiseration.

“I now propose to call before you the Count Pahlen, who will depose to some very important facts connected with this case. I may here observe that the families of Lauerstadt and Pahlen had for years been on the most intimate terms. Their estates, indeed, joined; and it was sought to unite the two families more closely in the ties of friendship by arranging a marriage between the only son of

the baron and the only sister of the Count Pahlen. In the meantime the baron died, and his son, the subject of the present enquiry, succeeded to the title and estates, and, as no difficulties existed to his union with Count Pahlen's sister, the requisite arrangements were made for the marriage, which was performed by the abbot, Count Pahlen's uncle."

The learned advocate concluded an eloquent and impressive address by calling into court the Count Pahlen. The substance of the evidence deposed to by the count was as follows:—That a few months back a monk of the Carmelite order came to the château and desired a private conference with the count. That, as he imagined it might relate to the business of his order, he referred him to his uncle the abbot. But this the monk declined; to the count alone would he unburthen himself. That the monk then began by stating that about three years ago he received the confession of a man who desired absolution not only for sins he had committed, but for one he was about to commit. That the monk reminded him that absolution was pronounced for sins which had been committed and repented of; but that to absolve a man from a sin which he only meditated, was to hold out a temptation to commit it; he, therefore, strongly remonstrated against it, and entreated the man to consider that by abstaining from the sin not yet perpetrated he might obtain pardon for those crimes of which he had been guilty. That the man then confessed

that he was in the service of a nobleman, who, failing to induce a young girl to consent to his dishonourable proposals, had offered her marriage; that, with the view of rendering the marriage invalid, he proposed that the servant should disguise himself as a priest and perform the ceremony. That the monk reprehended in the strongest terms the enormity of the offence, not only in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the church, whose ministers would be indignant at the insult offered to their sacred order. All the terrible powers which the church possessed would be put in force. Exclusion from mass and confession, refusal of the sacrament, and of extreme unction *in articulo mortis*, denial of sepulture in holy ground, of all funeral rites, of all the benefits of prayer and mass for the souls of the departed. That all these menaces were held out to the man, who trembled at the idea of burthening his conscience with such a sin. That the monk then suggested that another person, unknown to the baron, but whose silence and secrecy could equally be relied upon, might be prevailed upon to perform the service. That the baron yielded to the arguments which the monk had put into the mouth of his servant, for providing a substitute who should be utterly unknown to every one but the servant himself. That the monk was that substitute, and that he performed the ceremony without the least suspicion on the part of the bridegroom; and that after the celebration of the marriage a certificate of it was secretly given to the brother of the

bride, who was made to understand by signs that it was to be carefully preserved.

The court here interposed, and asked, "Who was the bridegroom, and where was the marriage performed?"

"Lauerstadt was the name of the bridegroom, and the place the chapel of the Château de Plauerfeldt," replied the Count.

The evidence of Count Pahlen then went on to show that the monk had been summoned to administer the extreme unction to the baron's servant, who was at the point of death: that the servant handed him a small box, desiring that it might be opened, and the injunctions found in it fulfilled. That this box contained a paper releasing the monk from the obligation of secrecy, which the confession of the penitent servant had imposed upon him. That this paper was still in the monk's possession, and that the monk had promised to produce it when required to do so.

THE CHIEF JUDGE.—"He is in court, we presume?"

M. CARLSDORFF.—"The last messenger despatched for him is not yet returned, but his arrival is expected every moment."

The baron, who had listened to Count Pahlen's evidence with the greatest attention, and who could not conceal his agitation during some parts of it, now transmitted a note to his advocate, who addressed the court.

M. DE FLORSBERG.—"The moment is not yet arrived

for me to dissect the strange body of evidence we have just heard, but I demand of the court that it shall forthwith order the monk to be called. If, after three proclamations he do not appear, it will not be denied that I have a right to require that his evidence be not received afterwards, and that the court should proceed to judgment upon the count's evidence, which being merely hearsay, is not entitled to the least weight."

M. CARLSDORFF.—"The impatience of the learned advocate is somewhat out of place. If he believe the baron to be innocent of the charge, he will not shrink from the minutest enquiry. Innocence is proved by investigation as gold is purified by fire. I should have expected that he would have been the loudest in calling for the monk, and that he would have interceded with the court to pronounce no sentence till it had had the benefit of his testimony. If indeed he have doubts of his client's innocence, if he is not *quite* clear that it will bear the test of examination, he acts like a prudent advocate in wishing to exclude the evidence of the monk. But I apprehend that the court will not feel the same impatience. Besides, there is one *trifling* fact which he has forgotten. There are other witnesses; and these I intend to call before I avail myself of the evidence of the monk. Call the *Baroness Ella Lauerstadt!*" concluded M. Carlsdorff, laying particular stress upon her title.

M. Montcalm was first sworn to interpret faithfully the

evidence given, in the only way in which the want of speech could allow it to be given.

There was now a pause of the deepest interest, whilst Ella was sent for, she having remained out of court during the whole of Count Pahlen's evidence. When she made her appearance every voice was hushed in silence, and every eye fixed with intense interest upon the mourner. She entered the court leaning upon her father, and holding her little child to her bosom. Her step was slow and trembling, her eyes one minute cast down to the earth, the next lifted up to her father's for comfort and pity. It was a sad sight to see the venerable old man dashing with mixed grief and anger the tears from his furrowed cheeks. Ella's face was flushed, but this momentary hectic gave place to a paleness which made her an object of more tender and touching interest. She seated herself upon a chair which, being in an elevated situation, enabled her to be seen by every person in court.

The bible was tendered to her upon which she was to take the oath ; she kissed the sacred book with reverence, and then, by signs, asked the interpreter what she was required to do. It was answered that she must give a full and true evidence against the prisoner.

It was now that the secret workings of her soul burst upon the astonished audience, in an interpretation given by M. Montcalm of the words she would have spoken, had God blessed her with the power of utterance.

"Bear witness against him! Never! I swore before God to obey him, and he has not released me from my oath; I swore to love him till death, and I will keep my oath. This is his child. Force not the wife and mother to turn against the father and the husband. Oh merciful judges! press me not to so unnatural an act! I am told I have no right to call myself his wife; but I believe myself to be so in the sight of God, before whose altar I received him as my husband. It cannot make me happy to know that he is punished; the hope of happiness is dead within me. But it would make me infinitely more wretched to think that I had been the means of punishing him. The child would hold up his hands and pray for mercy for his father, if he could speak. Oh spare and forgive him for the sake of his miserable wife and helpless infant. I live in penitence, and I pray for mercy. Judge him therefore in mercy, forgive him as I forgive him, and may God forgive him also!"

Such was the passionate appeal of Ella, as delivered by signs, and interpreted by M. de Montcalm. It may easily be conceived what an effect it produced. There was a low but general burst of sympathy; and pity and admiration were visible in the countenances of the judges. Her feelings had evidently overpowered her; for she sank down exhausted on her seat, folded her child in her arms, was raised by her father, and conducted out of court.

We had all expected that she would have given a more

particular narrative of the events that had occurred from her first knowledge of the baron, but after she had spoken, we agreed that nothing could have been more impressive. She little thought that her unwillingness to give evidence against the baron aggravated the general indignation against him, and confirmed the universal belief in his guilt.

The brother was next examined. But his evidence related only to his being present at the celebration of the marriage, and receiving afterwards the certificate which he produced, and which was read in court.

THE COURT.—“M. Carlsdorff, you will now produce the monk.”

This was a most painful moment. “Father Anselm!” the name of the monk, was called, but no one answered. Our anxiety became most painful. No one answered, no one appeared. M. Carlsdorff threw down his papers—M. Schiller clasped his hands—Count Pahlen was in dismay. All seemed to feel the deepest regret, except the baron and M. de Florsberg.

M. Schiller, after a few minutes’ consultation with M. Carlsdorff, claimed a right to have the monk’s evidence admitted if he should arrive before the judges had given their decision.

M. CARLSDORFF.—“I suspect (looking sternly at the baron) that there is one in court who could give us the latest intelligence of the monk.”

M. de Florsberg strenuously opposed M. Schiller’s de-

mand. The case of the complainant had been closed. It could not be re-opened.

The court did not think itself called upon to declare what it would do in a case not regularly before it, nor, according to present probability, likely to be. The baron's advocate was now called upon to proceed.

M. DE FLORSBERG.—“My lords, the time is at length arrived. Calumny has had its day. My client is now prepared, through me, to repel the charge which has been brought against his honour, and to prove that his only lawful wife is the Countess Sophia, of the noble and illustrious family of Pahlen.

“Perhaps I might think myself entitled to demand an acquittal without saying one word in the baron's defence. I might contend that the very evidence against him is not only insufficient to convict, but rather calculated to exonerate him altogether. For of what does it consist? Entirely of hearsay testimony—of a strange and clumsy narrative of a monk to the brother-in-law of the baron. A man whom the count had never seen, and of whose character he is perfectly ignorant, demands an audience of him. He brings the most serious charge against his sister's husband, claims to be believed upon his own assertion, but does not furnish a single proof. An unknown monk, or person pretending to be one, is listened to with eagerness, because he attempts to destroy the reputation of a nobleman who had a right to expect, but has not found, a defender in the brother of his

wife. No attempt is made to confront the accused with the accuser ; no disposition is shown on the part of the count to reject with disdain so infamous a charge. He feels no suspicion of its being fabricated. He gives credit to it at once, and pronounces condemnation without the slightest evidence. My lords, let us not inveigh against the revolutionary tribunals of France after this. At that sanguinary period the minds of men were acted upon by cunning and heartless demagogues, and were inflamed to madness. In their paroxysms they did acts from which in their sober moments they would have shrunk with horror. They were mad, and they acted like madmen. But in the present case there is no such plea as aberration of mind. Everything is done with coolness and deliberation. The baron is accused, and that is sufficient evidence of his guilt. No longer, therefore, I repeat, my lords, let us complain of the facility with which charges were admitted by the Inquisition ! no longer let us inveigh against the practice of throwing accusations into the lion's mouth at Venice ! My lords, the credulity of the count is so extraordinary, that it justifies our gravest suspicions. If the marriage of his sister could be set aside, and her offspring bastardized, the succession to the property which he would have inherited might descend to the count. I make no assertion, but if such a suspicion pass through our minds, the count must thank his own credulity for having given rise to it. Why did he not detain the accuser ? why did he not insist upon his repeating the story before the abbot, his

uncle? why did he not demand the paper which the dying man had placed in the hands of the priest? But no, no; he does none of these things; he suffers the monk to carry away the paper, and is quite satisfied with receiving the monk's address, with a promise that he will be forthcoming whenever his presence might be required. His address! how did he ascertain that it was correct? His promise! oh, he has kept it most punctually. Where is the monk? calumniator and coward appear! No, no, my lords, he comes not; he never will come. But *I* will produce the priest."

The whole court were struck with astonishment, and eager looks were directed to every part of the court.

"I have thus, my lords, disposed of the count's evidence. It is levelled with the dust, it is dispersed to the winds of heaven.

"But there are two other witnesses, incompetent witnesses, I shall always contend, in a court of justice, because they can neither be examined *vivâ voce*, nor be subject to a proper cross-examination. But I waive that objection, because I am instructed to give certain explanations connected with the evidence of the young woman, Ella Ebersdorff.

"My lords, I am not prepared to assert that the conduct of the baron has been strictly virtuous and discreet. He had those failings which, if youth cannot justify, it may palliate. The girl was beautiful—you see how beautiful. The lover was ardent,—the temptation above his power of

resistance. I am sure there must be many present who will readily enter into the feelings of my client. Hurried on by irresistible passion, he proffered marriage, and I am bound to add that a ceremony was gone through, though it had not the sanction of religion, nor was it according to the forms of the church. It was not celebrated by a regular priest. (Here there was an universal expression of 'Shame! shame!') I see the feeling with which this avowal is received. I cannot blame it; but it is my duty to clear my client from the charge of bigamy, which I can only do by proving that the first marriage was no marriage at all in the eye either of the church or of the law; that the second marriage is the only legal one. I shall produce the pretended priest, who was a domestic of the baron. Call Gaspar Wooller."

Gaspar Wooller instantly appeared—a man whose aspect was most forbidding, and whose whole exterior utterly belied the description given of him as being in the service of a nobleman. This, however, will not appear strange when it is remembered that the baron's servant—the man who was really present when the baron plighted his faith to Ella Ebersdorff in the chapel of the Château Plauerfeldt—was supposed to be no longer living, and could not therefore be produced in court. Consequently, a substitute had to be procured to give evidence in the place of the defunct servant; and this Gaspar Wooller was selected, by reason of his loose and unscrupulous character, for that purpose.

As Gaspar Wooller stepped into the witness box, M. de Florsberg, addressing the court, said,—“This, my lords, is the mock priest.”

The man was then examined, and he stated that he had been in the baron’s service, who employed him to disguise himself as a priest, and perform the marriage ceremony in the chapel of the Château de Plauerfeldt. He did perform it, under the idea that he was serving his master in a matter of little moment to the girl, and of less consideration to the baron himself.

M. DE FLORSBERG.—“I have nothing further to ask of this witness, my lords, and therefore he can retire, unless my learned friend on the other side should wish to put any questions to him.

M. CARLSDORFF.—“Let him remain. Now listen to me, sir. You have given very clear and concise evidence as regards the part you took in this so-called ‘pretended marriage;’ but I now wish you to remember a few circumstances which my learned brother does not care that we should know. Now, at the conclusion of the ceremony, did you not give a certificate of the marriage?”

GASPAR WOOLLER.—“No, I did not, for I was not asked for one; and if I had been, I could not have given it, for I cannot write.”

The whole court was in astonishment. The certificate was shown to the witness.

M. CARLSDORFF.—“Is that the certificate you gave?”

GASPAR WOOLLER.—“I gave none. I cannot write.”

M. CARLSDORFF.—“There is gross perjury somewhere, and there can be little doubt of the quarter from whence it proceeds. However, though you have forgotten everything about the certificate, you may remember the person of the bride and the day of the marriage? Was she of a fair or dark complexion? had she light eyes or dark?”

GASPAR WOOLLER.—“I did not look at her, and I have forgotten the day.”

M. CARLSDORFF.—“Oh! well-tutored witness!”

M. DE FLORSBERG.—“I call no new witnesses, nor are any necessary. The testimony of Gaspar Wooller shows the falsehood of all that narrative so strongly conveyed to the too credulous count. And though that testimony has been impeached, yet it is not very wonderful that the man, intent upon an office which required all his attention, should have had little time or inclination to contemplate the features of the woman; still less wonderful is it that he should have forgotten the day, which he had no interest in remembering, and which he had no suspicion he should ever be called upon to recollect. As to the certificate, that is one of the features of the plot which has been got up against the life and honour of my client. The fact is that no certificate was given.”

The court at this moment presented a singular spec-

tacle. There was a profound silence which lasted several minutes. The countenance of every one, with the exception of the baron and his advocate, expressed surprise and disappointment. The judges exchanged looks which seemed to say that the evidence was incomplete. They conferred together long and anxiously, and intently was every eye fixed upon them. It was a scene of the deepest interest. Every person's heart beat as if his own life and honour were implicated in the result. At the slightest noise in any part of the court, every look was directed to the place from whence it proceeded, as if some one was to appear who would unravel the mystery in which this transaction was at present so inextricably involved. It seemed almost as if a miracle were expected, that should elicit the truth and avenge the innocent.

The baron's advocate, aware of the feeling against the baron, was desirous of bringing the trial to as speedy a conclusion as possible. He entreated the court, in justice to the position of his injured client, to give judgment with as little delay as possible.

The senior judge, a venerable old nobleman, rose from his seat, after a conference with his colleagues.

THE JUDGE.—“It is seldom that the court has been called upon to deliver its judgment under circumstances more painful and embarrassing: It fears that it may not

have all the facts and proofs, all the evidence which would enable it to pronounce such a judgment as should satisfy the ends of justice, defeat the machinations of the guilty, and protect the innocent. Such are the fears of the court. But, however it may lament that deficiency, whatever suspicions it may entertain, it is bound to decide according to the evidence before it. If that be incomplete, if any has been kept back, the blame cannot be said to rest with the court.

“The charge against Baron Lauerstadt is the heaviest that can be imagined short of murder, and therefore it behoves us to see that it is clearly established, before we venture to pronounce a judgment of guilty, and award the punishment due to such a crime.

“The accused is entitled to the benefit of every doubt. The law must not be strained against him, nor interpreted largely for the purpose of bringing him within it. Where the evidence is deficient, that deficiency should operate in his favour; and no conclusion, no inference of guilt, must be drawn from any other source than that of clear and undisputed testimony. Suspicion, however strong or probable, should have no influence upon our decision, which, I repeat, must be given according to the evidence, and according to the evidence alone.”

The baron and his advocate exchanged looks of satisfaction.

"The court is of opinion that many of the reflections which the advocate of the accused cast upon Count Pahlen were wholly irregular and uncalled for. There was nothing in the evidence of the count calculated to throw doubt upon his veracity. It was clear and connected, and did not bear the least mark of fabrication. What purpose could it have answered? What object could it have accomplished? The count is sufficiently well acquainted with the nature of criminal proceedings to know that the repetition of any declaration or facts stated to him by another person cannot be received as evidence; that it is only hearsay evidence which our common law and common sense reject as inadmissible. The principal, the other person, must be produced, and give his evidence in open court. This has not been done in the present case; and, whilst the court is bound to say that the count's evidence cannot be received, it is bound also to declare its implicit belief that the count relied upon the appearance of the person from whom he had received his information. At the same time the court cannot refrain from remarking that the count seems to have been deficient in prudence, and to have neglected the precautions he ought to have adopted. He placed too implicit a reliance upon the promise of his informant, with whom he had no previous intimacy, and with whose character he was utterly unacquainted.

"Having dismissed this part of the case, I proceed with

other feelings to the evidence of the dumb witnesses. It requires all that calm and equal temper which a judge should possess to dwell with perfect coolness upon the testimony of the lady.

“The evidence of the brother has one remarkable feature in it—I mean the certificate of the marriage, to which I shall allude more particularly.

“I now proceed to the nature of the defence and the evidence adduced in behalf of the baron. The court is shocked at such a scene of iniquity,—at such a series of base and unmanly artifices. What a lesson does it afford against the indulgence of criminal passions! What a contempt does it exhibit of all those ties which hold society together, and prevent it from degenerating into the most lawless violence and brutality! If the innocence and beauty of the unhappy lady were insufficient to secure her from injury, surely the sad calamity which cuts her off from all converse with her fellow-creatures entitled her to find in the heart of every man a shield of protection. The very fact of her inability to proclaim an injury, ought to have deterred any one from inflicting it. But why do I dwell upon the improbability of such a crime? It is avowed, and almost gloried in. *Habemus confitentem reum!* The accused seems quite willing to bear the moral, provided he can be cleared from the legal guilt. If human law declares him innocent, he has no objection to incur the infamy of having

violated divine law. He proceeds in his career of crime with the utmost deliberation. He does not pause one moment. Her unlimited confidence in his honour, the purity and sincerity of her affection, awoke no corresponding feeling in his breast ; they appear only to have afforded an additional stimulus to his lust.

“The evidence produced on the part of the accused stands upon the unsupported testimony of a doubtful witness. It comes from the mouth of a participator in his projects, of a man who was his willing and paid agent. The evidence of this servant who officiated as priest is liable to great suspicion. The certificate and the evidence by which its authenticity is supported, bear the stamp of probability. If it were forged, I can see no benefit that could have accrued from the forgery. If the ceremony was performed by a person not duly qualified, a certificate from such a person could not have rendered the marriage the more legal. The witness swears that he did not give any certificate, for he cannot write. No evidence is offered to prove that he can ; no witnesses are brought forward to contradict his statement, and therefore whatever our doubts and suspicions may be—and they are strong—however we may be inclined to discredit his testimony, we are bound to resist that inclination, and to decide solely upon the evidence before us.

“The court, therefore, feels itself bound, in virtue of that obligation, and in the absence of all other evidence, to pronounce——”

At this moment a loud noise was heard at the outer gate of the hall. The judge sternly rebuked this interruption; but his voice was drowned in the cries of "Father Anselm! make way there! it is the monk! Father Anselm! Father Anselm!"

Every person rose as if actuated by a common impulse. Some expressed their exultation by words, others by clapping of hands. Carlsdorff and the count exchanged the warmest congratulations. Not so the baron and his advocate. The disappointment of the latter could only be felt in his professional character. But the baron had received a sudden and stunning blow. He grasped the iron rails that separated him from the body of the court, and sunk into the seat which had been provided for him.

Meanwhile the judge paused in delivering judgment, but paused, as if he expected an appeal from Count Pahlen's advocate.

A passage having been opened, Father Anselm, accompanied by a man closely muffled up, took his seat near the count, directing his attendant to seat himself behind him.

The baron's advocate meanwhile was busily engaged in referring to some reports before him, less, it should seem, with the hope of finding anything in them applicable to the present case, than of concealing his confession at the sudden turn which affairs had taken.

M. Carlsdorff rose with a dignity that had something peculiarly solemn in it.

“I must request the indulgence of the court for a few moments to recollect myself, and to regain that self-possession which this unexpected appearance of the monk has temporarily disturbed.” After the lapse of some minutes he proceeded:—

“In the early part of this day’s proceedings, my young and learned friend claimed a right to have Father Anselm’s evidence admitted should he arrive before judgment was finally given. I knew that your lordships would have been compelled to pronounce judgment upon the evidence as it stood. But I have now to tender fresh evidence. I should have bowed to your decision, however I might have lamented it, or however convinced I might have been that it did not satisfy the ends of justice. The court felt the difficulty in which it was placed. It feared that it had not *all* the facts before it; but in the absence of any further evidence, it was obliged to discharge the duty of deciding according to such as had been produced.

“In commenting upon the evidence of the Count Pahlen, the court very properly held, that as it was merely hearsay, and had not been corroborated by any direct evidence, it was clearly inadmissible. But we are now in a position to supply that evidence. Father Anselm’s presence will give consistency and confirmation to that narrative, which, from the unsupported testimony of the Count Pahlen, was not entitled to credit in a court of law. Will any man

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contend that the court is not bound to receive that which can alone remove all doubts, and throw light upon what has hitherto been dark and mysterious? Can any one call upon the court so to stultify itself as to say that though it felt the evidence to be incomplete, it would reject fresh evidence which would have rendered it perfect? Consider for a moment in what a position such rejection would place the court. It is nothing less than to decide wrongfully, because that which would have enabled it to decide justly has not been tendered at the precise moment when, by the ordinary rules of court, it ought to have been.

“But perhaps I am taking unnecessary trouble. I am replying to objections which may never be urged. What says my learned friend?”

M. DE FLORSBERG.—“He says, my lords, that the course recommended by the learned advocate is irregular, unprecedented, and inadmissible. It would be a re-opening of the case after it has been closed on the part of the prosecution. The judge, when called upon to give judgment, is bound to believe that sufficient evidence has been laid before him whereon a satisfactory decision may be founded. He proceeds to pronounce that decision, and from that moment the mouths of the contending parties are hermetically sealed. They cannot intrude any more matter upon the attention of the judge, but must await his decision, founded solely upon the evidence already adduced. If other evi-

dence could have been procured, why was it not procured in time? The trial was not precipitated: sufficient notice was given. If witnesses neglect attending, whose and where is the blame? if damage or injury be done by their neglect, they alone are responsible for it: they must abide the consequences of their own act. The case was closed, I repeat, both on the part of the accuser and the accused, the moment the judge opened his lips to pronounce judgment. It cannot be re-opened, and therefore the evidence of the monk, or whoever he may be, or whatever he may chose to allege, is inadmissible."

M. CARLSDORFF.—"I have been disappointed. I expected my learned friend to have assumed his highest and haughtiest tone. I was prepared to hear him decline all objections, and take his stand not upon the narrow foundation of a legal subtlety, but upon the broad basis of immutable truth. I thought I should have heard him exult at the opportunity afforded him of furnishing fresh proofs of his client's innocence, and of the injury done to his pure and unsullied character."

THE COURT.—"The court has no difficulty in coming to a decision. It is bound to receive all the evidence which bears upon every case brought before it. It does not provide evidence; but it is not to reject evidence, legally admissible. Evidence may be withheld, but the court is not to be blamed, because the fact must be unknown to it. It acts in obedience to its oath of office, which is to decide all

cases according to such evidence as shall be brought before it, and according to that alone. Had no other evidence been tendered but that which preceded the speech of the president of the court, its decision must have been framed and founded upon it; but the question assumes a very different shape when fresh evidence is offered. To demand of the court that it should be bound only by the one, and reject the other, is to ask it to give a partial judgment, and to refuse having recourse to those lights which might enable it to pronounce a clear and conscientious decision. The court accedes to the demand of admitting further evidence."

"Call Father Anselm!"

Father Anselm immediately rose—a man not old in point of years—scarcely, indeed, beyond his prime; but whose pale face and emaciated frame showed evident traces of a long and wasting grief.

THE COURT.—"The court would know from the reverend father why he delayed obeying the order to attend the trial?"

Father Anselm produced a paper, which was read by the proper officer. It purported to be a letter from the clerk of the tribunal, informing him that the trial had been put off, and that due notice would be sent him when it was to come on.

The clerk of the tribunal declared it to be a forgery, no such letter having been written by him. Everybody, I believe, was more shocked than surprised.

FATHER ANSELM.—"I should certainly have given im-

plight credit to that letter, had not a second messenger arrived from Count Pahlen pressing my immediate presence, and making no mention of any postponement of the trial. I set off at once, and by dint of travelling night and day, reached the gates of the tribunal before the judge had pronounced the final decision of the court."

M. Carlsdorff proceeded to examine the monk. He corroborated every part of Count Pahlen's testimony. When he came to that part which related to the substitution of himself for the baron's servant, and the consequent celebration of the marriage, the court summoned the usher of the tribunal.

THE COURT.—"Let the man who swore to the celebration of the marriage, Gaspar Wooller, be secured!"

The officer having informed the court that he had left it, orders were forthwith issued to make the strictest search after him.

FATHER ANSELM.—"I had drawn up a certificate of the marriage, which I delivered to the brother of the bride, with an injunction to keep it about his person, and never to part with it out of his hands."

Being shown the certificate, he declared that that was the one he had given, written by himself.

M. CARLSDORFF.—"So decisive a testimony would be quite sufficient for me to stop at once and demand the decision of the court. But let me first ask my learned friend if he has any wish to cross-examine Father Anselm?"

M. de Florsberg looked at the baron, who neither spoke nor made any sign to him. The advocate remained silent.

M. CARLSDORFF.—“I might here, I repeat, close my case, and assert that the crime of bigamy has been clearly established; but there are other circumstances which must be stated, and which are of a deeper and darker dye. The court will recollect that both the count and Father Anselm alluded to a paper which was delivered to the latter by a dying man, which paper I now propose to read.”

It stated that the writer, believing himself to be at the point of death, desired to unburthen his conscience of the sins he had committed in the flesh. He had been in the employment of Baron Lauerstadt, who, on account of some intrepidity he had evinced in a night brawl in which the baron was concerned, took him into his confidence. His passion for Ella, his fruitless attempts to seduce her, and his subsequent determination to deceive her by a feigned marriage, were imparted to him, and, as we have already seen, were communicated to, and defeated by, the monk. But the servant followed his master to a distant country, and, no longer strengthened in good principles by Father Anselm, returned to those vicious courses which had recommended him to the favour of the baron. He took no steps to prevent the celebration of the second marriage, but, on the eve of the ceremony, divulged to his master the deceit which had been practised with respect to the first marriage; for fearing, he pretended, to expose himself to the vengeance

of the Church, he had engaged a regular priest to perform it. This disclosure was made for the purpose of giving him increased influence over his master, who, though indignant in the first instance at the deceit, contented himself with bribing his servant to secrecy. The second marriage was then celebrated.

Yet, notwithstanding this marriage, the baron pursued the same career of profligacy, and at length proposed to his servant to carry off from the arms of an aged mother her only child. Then it was that his conscience began to take the alarm, an effect which no doubt was accelerated, if not produced, by the fact that the girl against whom such an outrage was meditated was one whose affections he had endeavoured to secure for himself. The baron expected as prompt a compliance with this command as he had been accustomed to exact upon all former occasions. But the servant refused, and, persisting in his refusal, was struck down by a blow from the baron. The situation of affairs was changed in a moment; the crouching domestic was converted into a commanding master, and the tyrant was compelled to hear the language of reproach from his slave. Smarting and humiliated by the blow, he warned him in no measured terms that his life and honour were at his mercy; that a word from him could hold him up to the scorn and contempt of the whole world, and to the vengeance of the law. But the baron, recovering his self-possession, expressed his sorrow for the blow, declared his readiness to desist from all attempts upon the girl, and desired to see him in a

retired part of the park, where they might resume the conversation with more calmness, and devise some means whereby the mother of the girl might be induced to give her consent to his union with her daughter.

But any design to conciliate his servant was far from the baron's intention. He might bribe him into temporary silence, but his present conduct had shown him of what he was capable, should any demand, however insolent or extravagant, be rejected. He felt himself to be in his power, and resolved upon putting him to death. There, whilst he was conversing calmly with the servant, he suddenly drew out a pistol and fired. The man fell. The baron quitted the place with all speed, and the man, after remaining some time where he had fallen, was found by some labourers, and conveyed to a neighbouring farm-house. The surgeon pronounced the danger to be imminent, and the man desired to have a priest sent for. For some days, however, no priest could be procured. At the end of a week, Father Anselm arrived, and discovered in the wounded man the domestic whom he had attended about three years before. The penitent was able now to commit his confession to writing, and enjoined the father to make an immediate disclosure to the count.

Such a narrative excited, in the highest degree, the indignation of the court. But, during the reading of it, the baron never raised his head, resting it on his hand, and seeming to take no farther interest in the proceedings.

M. DE FLORSBERG.—“Having received no instructions from my client respecting this paper, and the court not having interfered to prevent its being read, I have not urged any objection. But surely the court does not mean to attach any importance to such a document. We have no proof of its authenticity; we have no evidence that it was really written by the man in question. He is dead, and cannot be questioned. But how do we know that advantage has not been taken of his death to fabricate the paper, and lay it to his account. ‘Dead men tell no tales.’ It is not worth more than hearsay evidence, and is inadmissible.”

The court agreed in opinion that it could not be received, no proof having been given that it was really written by the man.

A smile stole over the pale face of the monk, and, as soon as the court had given this decision, he rose. “That proof, my lords, I can furnish. Summon Carl Webber.”

The man who had come with the monk into court, and who had remained muffled up in such a manner as to conceal his face, now stood up and threw off his disguise.

THE BARON.—“Carl Webber! Carl Webber, alive!”

CARL WEBBER.—“Yes, my lord baron, though your lordship did your best to send me to my long account.

“After I had delivered that paper to Father Anselm, I fell into a deep sleep. My wound assumed a more healthy appearance, and I recovered. Making my recovery known

to Father Anselm, I remained with him for some days, after which it was settled that I should fix my residence as near as possible to the Baroness Ella, for we feared that some efforts might be made to seize both her and the child. And strong reasons had I for thinking (and he fixed a stern eye upon the baron) that my fears were not without foundation. I did not leave my place of residence till summoned by Father Anselm to attend him to the trial."

But the events of this extraordinary day were yet to receive an addition. Gaspar Wooller was here brought into court. He was immediately ordered to be placed by the side of the baron, whom he looked at with an expression of the deepest malice.

THE COURT.—"Gaspar Wooller, you have sworn that the marriage ceremony between Baron Lauerstadt and Ella Ebersdorff was performed by yourself. Do you mean to persist in that oath? But before you answer, I forewarn you, that evidence has been given in direct contradiction to your own, by the priest who *did* perform the ceremony, and who has sworn that he delivered a certificate to the brother of the baroness. What say you?"

GASPAR WOOLLER looked at the judge, and then exclaimed in his harsh discordant voice,—

"It is false! all false! Every thing I said and swore to was false as hell. I will make a full and true confession. (The baron must have made some movement, or touched the witness.) It is of no use now. I will do your devil's job no

longer. You cannot save me from the gallows, and I will do one act of justice, in assisting you to go there also.

“Please your lordships, when Carl Webber was dismissed, as I was told, for robbing the baron, I was taken into his service. He spoke to me over and over again, of Webber’s ingratitude, so that I looked upon him as one of the greatest villains that ever existed. I was to replace him, and he boasted what he would do for me, if I proved an obedient servant. I promised to obey him, and I kept my word. I never made any objections, and for why? My master always put it to me in this way: Gaspar, you know that if you do what I command you, you are not answerable for it yourself, no more than a soldier for obeying the commands of his superior officer. I thought this but fair, and as he was to bear all the blame, I never stopped to find out any reasons for not doing his will. He was very familiar in his talk with me, and would often laugh at the arts he had used to seduce such females as attracted his fancy. Well, please your lordships, we went on in this way for a long time, when one morning he calls me to him and says, ‘Gaspar, what do you think has happened?’ ‘I don’t know,’ I replied, ‘but I can guess,—the old game.’ ‘No, no, Gaspar, nothing of the kind. My brother-in-law has always been against my marriage with his sister, as he wished her to take the veil, in order that he might inherit her fortune. So, Gaspar, he has got somebody to swear I have another wife, and to forge a certificate of the mar-

riage. That certificate is now in the possession of a person who is deaf and dumb, and who, I understand, always carries it about with him. We must have it at all hazards; and therefore you must contrive to decoy him into some lonely place, and, if you cannot get it by any other means, he must be put out of the way.' (There was a general shudder throughout the court.) I took a comrade with me in case of need, and decoyed the young man by a note, supposed to be written by his father's order, into a dark corner of the heath, and there we set upon him. Just as we had overpowered him, and at the very moment when my hand was plunged into his pocket for the purpose of seizing the document, a blow on the head announced to me that somebody had come to his assistance. Turning round, I confronted a man, with a pistol in his hand. I had one too, and instantly discharged it. The devil, however, for once deserted me, for it missed. The fire was returned by the stranger, and with better effect, as the ball had broken my arm. Nothing was now to be done, but to get off as fast as we could. After I had got my arm put to rights, I had several other commissions, all about the same business. I was not to lose sight of the person who had the certificate, but somehow or other I never could get within arm's length of him again. I was next to secure the mother and child, who, the baron said, were to be passed upon him as his wife and son, by a first marriage. Here again I was at fault, for some one always crossed my path, just as I was

on the point of executing my purpose. My master then sent me a letter, which I was to dispatch by a special messenger to Father Anselm, as if it came from the clerk of the court, to put off his attendance, upon the assurance that the trial had been postponed. I was also suborned by the baron to swear that I had personated the priest, and performed the ceremony between him and a girl called Ella Ebersdorff.

“ All these services I performed, my master having convinced me, as I have before said, that I was bound to obey him, and need not fear the consequences, because he was responsible for them himself.

“ But I find now that he has been deceiving me, and that he can neither save himself from punishment nor me. So thinking myself ill-treated, I will no longer keep a silent tongue, when I find it will not save my neck. And now I have made a clean breast, and have nothing more to say.”

The blunt, coarse, but explicit manner in which this narrative was given; the brutal ignorance of the man, and the indifference with which he avowed such a series of crimes, impressed every person in court with feelings of indescribable disgust and horror. A new and darker leaf seemed to have been opened in the book of human nature.

The solemn and awful judgment of the court was now to be given, and though the nature of it might be anticipated, everybody expected it with intense interest.

The court first demanded whether any other evidence

was meant to be offered, either on behalf of the accuser or the accused. Both advocates replied in the negative. The judges then retired and remained in deliberation about an hour—and a long and anxious hour it was.

THE PRESIDENT then rose:—"The court has now had placed before it the fullest information on this most important case, and so clear and conclusive is the evidence on the points of identity and collusion, in criminating the accused, that it has no difficulty in pronouncing such a judgment as must satisfy every one who has heard that evidence. There is nothing now upon which to hang a doubt, nothing is concealed, not a link of the chain is wanting. To this consummation we have been led by that fortunate, I had almost said miraculous, event, which furnishing us with fresh evidence at a most critical period, saved the court from pronouncing a judgment which, founded as it must have been upon the evidence then before it, would have been erroneous and unjust.

"It happens in this case—it rarely happens in others, that the court is not compelled to weigh the credibility of one witness against the credibility of another. The evidence for the accused has been destroyed by his own hands : Gaspar Wooller has put down Gaspar Wooller, and the conviction of the accused has been less the work of the witnesses in support of the accusation than of the accused himself.

"But there is one point which I must particularly enforce. The charge against the accused was confined to bigamy, but

it has been proved during the course of the trial, that it might have assumed a more serious and formidable a shape; that perjury had been committed, and attempts at murder were executed as well as bigamy. But the court is called upon by the indictment to confine its attention to the latter offence.

“Gaspar Wooller, deep as is your guilt, it has one shade of atrocity less than that of your master. You appear to have been impressed with the strange belief, that obedience to the commands of your master was a duty which relieved you from the sin, and the penalties of any act you might commit by his order. Let all who hear me know that obedience becomes criminal when it is paid to commands which are in violation of religion, morality and law; you are not to shelter yourselves under these orders, and to conceive that he who gave them can shield you from the consequences, either here or hereafter. You cannot fail to know the difference between vice and virtue, and this knowledge renders you, and you alone, responsible for your actions.

“The sentence of the court is, that you, Gaspar Wooller, be sent to the fortress of Kuffstein, and be kept there to hard labour for the remainder of your life.”

The baron had for some time seemed wholly indifferent to what was passing. He paid no attention to the judge's address, but looked about him once or twice with wildness and distraction. On a sudden, just as the judge had finished

passing sentence upon Wooller, and was on the point of directing his address to him, he rose from his seat. His face was of an ashy paleness; his whole frame was convulsed; he attempted to speak, but, after two or three efforts, desisted, as if he could not conquer a choking sensation in his throat. A heavy groan was then heard; he burst into a horrid laugh, or rather yell, gave one piercing scream, and fell forward upon his face.

Upon lifting him up, life had left him; he had breathed his last.

After the surprise and horror of such an incident had somewhat subsided, the judge concluded his judgment by sentencing Baron Lauerstadt to be beheaded, and his body buried without the city walls, in the ground allotted to malefactors.

The latter part of the sentence was of course the only one that could be carried into execution.

The marriage of Ella was declared to be legal, and her son empowered to assume the title of his father.

LEAF THE THIRD.

THE CHATEAU DE BRIENNE.



I MENTIONED an old château which, with its woods, formed the western boundary of the heath. It had long been unoccupied, and, like all old buildings, had the reputation of being haunted.

There was not a villager who had not seen some strange sight himself, or who had not been assured by persons, who had been assured by others, that lights suddenly appeared in the windows of the château and were as suddenly extinguished. Some who had the hardihood to approach the château nearer than their more timid neighbours had heard, or fancied they heard, groans and screams as of persons in distress. Nay, one or two went the length of declaring that they had seen a figure actually glide from one window to the other and then vanish.

Though I was convinced that these stories were mere creations of the brain, I had still a curiosity to take a view of the interior of the château.

I set out accordingly one morning about the middle of autumn. The air was bracing; and the woods that sur-

rounded the château had assumed that appearance which gives to this season a character, at once so beautiful and picturesque. The expanse of foliage, with its varied hues of green, brown, gold, and scarlet, glistening in the sun's last rays, and blended into one harmonious whole, was spread along the horizon for many miles in circumference, evidently denoting that an estate of considerable magnitude had originally belonged to the lord of the château. The gloomy and solemn grandeur of the château itself, awakening in the mind a feeling almost akin to awe, contrasted strangely with the rich and inspiriting tints which those distant woods revealed to the enraptured sight.

The mind adapts itself to circumstances and places. In contemplating these woods, now as solitary and silent as if man had either never been created, or had ceased to exist, I experienced a similar degree of depression to that which we feel when wandering among the graves of the dead, certain that ere long we shall ourselves be as still and as silent.

In such a train of thought I made my way towards the château. It was a venerable edifice of the thirteenth century—one of the gates bearing the date of 1225. It had its moat and its drawbridge, (as all old castles had,) which were not then, as now, scenes of recreation and amusement, but more frequently those of bloodshed and contention. The drawbridge was flanked on each side by a tower, in which holes and fissures had been pierced,

through which any hostile force might be assailed. The outward walls of the château had been built for strength rather than for elegance. The state apartments, as well as those inhabited by the family, were in a pavilion, which occupied the south side, and was erected on a gentle eminence, sloping down to a wide and rapid stream, which, crossing the park, dashed down a precipitous rock into a glen, and then pursued its sinuous course to the Rhine.

The drawbridge had long disappeared, but the chains which had raised and lowered it still remained. The massive gate, too, with its frowning portcullis, opening into the court yard, was still there. The moat was wide and deep, but had for many years been dry, and was now filled with rank grass and noxious plants. It was with difficulty that I descended into it; but the ascent, that was to conduct me to the château, was not only difficult but perilous. That side of the moat, which encircled the area enclosing the château, had been strengthened by a wall of rude and irregular stones, which appeared at first sight to afford every facility for scaling it; but on examination I found that the crumbling earth, which scarcely held them together, would most likely give way, and precipitate me to the ground, and, possibly, from a considerable height. However, I made the attempt, and, by a close and careful scrutiny of each separate stone before trusting my weight to it, I succeeded in reaching the summit. Arrived there, I took a hurried survey of the château. The stems of ivy

which clung around its walls had nearly obscured the long-pointed windows with which the building was studded. The mullions, indeed, were nowhere visible, so completely was the château enshrouded in its dark green coverlet. The gates and doors had been securely fastened ; but here and there was a broken window, where the fastenings had given way. By these means I gained admission, and soon found myself in the hall of the château. It was built of dark oak or chestnut. The roof was arched and groined, and round the hall ran a gallery capable of holding a large concourse of spectators. Time was when tilts and tournaments, and balls and feasts, were celebrated in the vast area of this hall. But now, everything was silent and still—nothing stirred, not even the tattered flags; and banners, which hung above my head, told of battles long past, and of heroes whose bones had long been mouldering in the tomb!

In the sides of the hall were niches containing suits of armour, helmets, and cuirasses, covered with the dust and cobwebs of many years. Two rows of marble pillars occupied the whole length of the hall. The floor was mosaic. The windows were of coloured glass, and the rays of the setting sun threw a splendid stream of light across the eastern side of the hall.

But this part of the building, reserved for pomp and parade, did not suffice to gratify my curiosity. I was more anxious to penetrate into the interior apartments, into those which had always been set apart for the use of the family.

It was possible I might find something there that would give me a more intimate acquaintance with the former inhabitants: some inscription, some old book, some manuscript that might have been concealed in a drawer, or cabinet, or panel. The stairs and the different apartments were much less decayed than I expected to find them, though twenty years had elapsed since the château had been inhabited. The large mirrors of Venetian glass, with their dark frames of oak or ebony, still rested against the wainscot; the chairs, which had once been covered with velvet, fringed with gold, were entire, as well as the massive tables. I searched both tables and chairs, but they "yielded no information." The bed rooms were hung with tapestry, but the colours had faded, and the countenances of the figures had a pale and rueful expression, as if they mourned the absence or death of their former lords. The beds of velvet had been surmounted with plumes of feathers, but the velvet yielded to the least touch, and the feathers had disappeared. The frames of the windows had been gilt. But there was one room which had been more richly ornamented than the others. It had two ante, or dressing, rooms, from which a noble view of the river, the park, and the distant hills was obtained. This room had a more modern and a cleaner appearance than the rest, and I indulged an idle fancy that it might have been lately inhabited. There was a table, which had been drawn close to the bed, and a chair beside it.

In reading what I am about to relate, suitable allowance must be made for the place, and the feelings which it was calculated to excite. I lifted up the hangings of the bed, searched behind the tapestry, examined the frames of the windows, in the hope of finding something that might satisfy my curiosity. On a part of one of the arched windows, where the arch was surmounted by a sculptured rosette, I discovered a simple inscription in very small characters, in the centre of this emblem : *Eheu mater ! cara et infelix !* Simple as it was, it was full of expression; and conveyed a story of suffering and sorrow :—the suffering of an unhappy and beloved parent, the sorrow of an affectionate child.

Whilst I was thus engaged, a deep and hollow groan seemed to issue from an apartment at the extremity of the passage. Such a sound at such a moment was awful and startling in the extreme. A cold perspiration burst from every pore, and my limbs trembled convulsively. I was then to prove the reality of the stories that had been told me; to ascertain whether the fears of the villagers were unfounded or not; and that the château did indeed deserve the awful character which had been given of it. I was about to see, perhaps, an inhabitant of another world, some spirit that had been suffered to re-visit our sublunary sphere; it might be to tell of horrid deeds done in the flesh, of murders unavenged, of victims confined in dungeons, dark, loathsome, and hideous.

All these ideas rushed upon my mind, and kept me chained, as it were, to the spot, unable to do more than fix my eyes upon the place from whence the groan proceeded. My fears were wound up to the highest pitch of agony, when the groan was repeated: a heavy tread followed, the door opened, and a pale spectre-like figure advanced towards me. I heard no more, I saw no more. Nature could no longer bear up against the terror of such a sight, and I fell senseless to the ground.

How long I remained in this state I know not, but when I came to myself I beheld Father Anselm supporting me and bathing my face. "Father Anselm!" I exclaimed, as soon as I had recovered the faculty of speech. But the good monk made a sign to me to be silent, and taking me by the arm led me out of the château by a passage with which he seemed to be well acquainted.

As soon as we had reached the wood in my way back, I again spoke to him, expressing my thanks for his seasonable interference, which had saved me from the horror of such a spectacle, for I still laboured under the belief that I had seen some spirit or being of another world.

Father Anselm then explained that he had assumed this spectral appearance for purposes of his own, and which had given rise to the report of the château being haunted. He begged me to pursue the subject no further that evening, but requested me to meet him in the wood next day.

I did not fail to be at the appointed spot, where Father Anselm was waiting for me. He was leaning against one of the trees, and his look and figure combined, seemed to be the personification of sorrow softened by resignation. He greeted me in silence, and we proceeded to the château. On one side of it there was a descent to a door covered with ivy, which the father opened, and which led by a passage, that had been made under the bed of the moat, into the interior of the château. It had been used in time of war to convey or to receive intelligence; an enemy could scarcely have discovered it, or if he had, would have derived little advantage from the discovery, the defence on the side of the château to which it led being so strong. I followed the venerable father to the apartment where I had been so alarmed the day before, and which I did not even now enter without a feeling of awe. We then took our seats, and he commenced his explanation:—

“I know not the motive that brought you here yesterday, whether it was mere curiosity, or some previous acquaintance with the history of the owners of the château. It matters not,” he continued, seeing me disposed to satisfy him on the point. “Some undefined purpose often leads us to form projects which we had never contemplated. We are irresistibly induced to visit particular spots, and to do particular acts; but we cannot

account for, nor explain, the impulse. We attribute it to mere curiosity, but this curiosity has a cause which is altogether hidden from us. Let us therefore believe that it is one of those means which Providence, in its superintending care, condescends to use for wise and beneficial purposes. I have, perhaps, erred in keeping my sorrows locked within the recesses of my own heart; I have never spoken of them to a human creature; I have sought little intercourse with the world, except in my character of priest: but in this studied silence I have perhaps been criminal. Our trials and our sorrows are not inflicted upon us that we should keep them to ourselves. If they be the punishment of misconduct they should be made known, that they may operate as a beacon and an example to others. We dare to commit sin which we know cannot be concealed from the eye of God, and yet we dread encountering the reproach of man by suffering our guilt to be made known. It would almost seem as if our shame were less on account of the commission of a crime than of the discovery of it. I have resolved therefore to cast off the veil I have worn too long, and to relate to you the story of my life.

“ This château and the surrounding domain were the property of my ancestors for many centuries. It is said to have been built by one of them on his return from the fifth Crusade, and he gave it the name of the Château de Brienne, a knight of that name having saved his life. Here

his descendants lived through all the changes and revolutions which have taken place during nearly six centuries; and here I, the last of their race, might have lived in equal honour and esteem.

“ My father, Count Otho, in one of his campaigns in Italy, fell in love with the daughter of a noble Venetian. She had a brother, Count Orsini, whose pride and ambition were unbounded, and whose violence of temper was so desperate as to have overawed even his own parents. His sister returned my father’s affection, but the brother thwarted it in all possible ways, for he had determined that she should take the veil, in order that the whole fortune of the family might descend to him. It was in vain that my father remonstrated against the cruelty of such a sacrifice, or urged the right which his sister had of deciding whether or not she would take the veil, and denounced the tyranny of crushing all her hopes, that the wealth of the family might centre in him.

“ To remonstrances so just he could not make any satisfactory reply, but, in the haughtiness of his temper, he dropped a hint of chastising my father’s insolence, and, drawing his sword, made a pass at him before he had time to put himself on guard. By springing back a few steps he avoided the blow, and, unsheathing his own sword, disarmed the count, whose weapon he broke over his head.

“ Another passion now raged in the heart of the brother.

Hatred of my father absorbed every other feeling, and he determined upon revenge. I know not by what means the Lady Paulina Orsini came to the knowledge of her brother's intentions, but she contrived to put my father on his guard, imploring him, as he loved her, to fly from the country, and leave her to her fate, which doomed her to a convent, to which she was to be conveyed next morning. My father was not of a nature to put up with the loss of such a treasure ; he determined to sacrifice his life rather than suffer her brother to execute his barbarous resolution. The time was short, but he had activity, zeal, courage, and the truest affection for the lady, to support him. He collected a band of brave fellows, who were all masked, ascertained the road which led to the convent, and, before day-break, placed his men on each side a narrow pass at the entrance of a wood. The count's carriage no sooner reached the pass than the men surrounded it. The count, who had imagined that this was merely an attack of robbers, pulled out his purse, but my father dragged him out of the coach, and ordered him to be bound. He then approached the Lady Paulina, who had expected nothing less than the most ignominious treatment from a band of lawless freebooters. You may easily conceive that my father soon removed all uneasiness on this head, and succeeded in persuading the lady that she could no longer trust to the protection of her brother, and that she could only be released from danger by confiding herself to the

arms of her lover. To these arguments, strengthened by her affection, she yielded, and they proceeded with all speed to Venice. He there embarked in a gondola, which put them on board a felucca bound to Trieste, where they were safely landed, and immediately married.

“Of a marriage brought about under such difficulties I was the only issue, and, of course, engrossed the love of both my parents. I was their idol; an object which could not be less than perfect in everything. I was not suffered to go to a public school, but masters were provided for me at home.

“The heir to such a name and such possessions could not do otherwise than make the tour of Europe, that foreign travel and foreign courts might complete what private education had begun. I made the tour of Germany, visited Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna. From Vienna I proceeded through the Tyrol to Venice, for my parents were anxious I should stay there some time, and my mother fondly hoped that I might be the means of reuniting a family which had been so long estranged. It was about the time of the Carnival that I arrived at Venice, and immediately repaired to the Orsini palace. I expected, of course, that I should receive an invitation, or that some member of the family would call upon me. Not a person came near me, nor was a letter or a message sent, nor was the least notice taken of me. This appeared singular. Twenty years ought to have extinguished all animosity, and the desire of revenge should

have ceased to exist when there was no longer any inducement to gratify it.

“ Displeased as I was I had no means of showing my displeasure, but resolved not to take any further steps towards a reconciliation with so haughty a race. At last chance brought about an introduction to them. I was at a grand entertainment given by the Austrian chargé d'affaires, and was amongst the first persons that arrived. My name was announced, and, on my entrance into the saloon, the chargé d'affaires took me by the hand, and, leading me to a group at the further end of the saloon, said, ‘Give me leave to introduce my young friend, Count Otho Winceslaus, to the Count Orsini and his son, Stanislaus Orsini.’ The count received me coldly, and surveyed me sternly. ‘I ought not,’ I replied, addressing myself to the chargé d'affaires, ‘to have been indebted to your excellency for an introduction to my uncle.’ He seemed surprised. ‘I made it my first duty to announce my arrival to Count Orsini, and to leave for him a letter from my mother.’

“ ‘True, true,’ replied the count, ‘it had escaped my memory; I had forgotten it.’ ‘It is of no consequence, count,’ and I turned to his son. ‘And are you, sir?’—I spoke loud enough to be heard by his father—‘blessed with such a memory? It is convenient to forget those whom we cannot remember without recollecting the injuries we have done them.’ ‘How, sir!’ exclaimed Stanislaus; but he

checked himself, and was silent. I fixed my eyes upon him. ‘Do you address yourself to me, sir?’ He made no reply; and the chargé d’affaires, seeing the awkwardness of our position, put some questions relative to Vienna, and the conversation soon became general. There was music and dancing, and I had the happiness of having one of the loveliest girls in the room for my partner. In the intervals of dancing she was accosted by several of her acquaintance, to whom she appeared to be an object of much interest. ‘Sophia Orsini,’ said a venerable old lady, beckoning to her, and I found I had been dancing with my cousin. She flew from me to her relation, and upon her return I saw that something had discomposed her. ‘And is Sophia Orsini displeased because, without knowing it, she has been dancing with her cousin?’ ‘No, no,’ she said, ‘don’t think so, but my grandmother, by my father’s command, desires me not to fatigue myself by dancing any more. I really am not fatigued, but I must obey my father, and I came back to tell you.’ ‘Adieu! my dear cousin,’ I said, as I led her to a seat near her grandmother, ‘don’t suffer yourself to think ill of your cousin, against whom your family seem to have taken such an unnatural dislike.’ She bowed her head, and, as she took her seat next to her venerable relative, I said to the latter, ‘Be not offended with me, madam, for availing myself of this opportunity of paying my dutiful respects to the parent of my mother. She has long pined over the neglect of her

family, though she has the consolation of knowing that she does not deserve it." I bowed low and retired.

"I waited next day upon the Austrian minister, to whom I related the story of my father's marriage, and the opposition made to it by my uncle. 'He is the object of general dislike and fear,' replied the minister; 'for his temper is most unforgiving and revengeful, and there are no means which he will not adopt to attain his end. He has neither forgotten nor forgiven the manner in which his wishes were frustrated by your father.' 'They never do forgive who do the wrong.' 'He hates you, because he hated your father. The count is only known by his dissipated habits; he has been married, and has but two children. Sophia Orsini is the redeeming member of the family, and the only one who is regarded with anything like affection and esteem.'

"I have dwelt thus long upon the early period of my residence at Venice, because I wish to make you acquainted with my mother's family, and prepare you for the events that followed.

"Whether it was the difficulty that attended all intercourse with Sophia Orsini, or her own surpassing loveliness, that determined me to improve our acquaintance, I know not. Perhaps, in the first instance, the former cause was the most powerful; but the second soon superseded it. I did not make any further effort to become acquainted with the other members of the family; but I sought every opportunity of seeing Sophia. I frequented every public place

where she was likely to be present ; but she was always strictly watched, and therefore I could not approach her. Of an age and disposition not to be deterred by difficulties, I persevered in my purpose, and my vanity whispered to me, that Sophia was as little satisfied with these attempts to divide us as I was. My gondola was always nearest hers ; I followed her to mass, and sometimes had an opportunity of addressing a few words to her. I lamented the hostility of her family ; I spoke of the affection with which she had inspired me, and interested her feelings for her aunt, whom she resembled in the delicacy and gentleness of her manners ; finally I implored her not to suffer herself to be the victim of family feud and animosity.

“On a sudden a complete change took place in the behaviour of part of the family. Stanislaus Orsini sought my acquaintance as eagerly as he had at first appeared to shun it, declaring that he would no longer suffer himself to be influenced by the absurd prejudices of his father. We became very intimate ; and, as if to enhance the value of his friendship, he would dwell upon the disapprobation which his father expressed of our intimacy, and the commands he had imposed upon him to discontinue it. Stanislaus was a man of boundless extravagance, and had the mania for gambling to an extraordinary degree. I would have snatched him from such ruinous pursuits, but advice was useless—it always is to a gamester. I accompanied him in the hope of being some check upon him, or at

least of preventing him from becoming a dupe. I was for some time a mere spectator; I felt no interest in the game, and never ventured to play. But let no one frequent the gaming-house, under the presumption that he shall be able at all times to resist the constantly recurring temptation. At first we look on without interest, and lament the madness of the passion, but the unguarded moment arrives at last, when we catch the infection and become perhaps the most ardent in the pursuit;—such was my unhappy case.

“ I soon ridiculed all moderation—laughed at all calmness—and thus played the game of my antagonists. My rashness was their profit; my intemperance their gain. Occasionally they irritated me by their taunts; sometimes they inflamed me, by advising me to be more cool. I staked and lost—doubled—trebled—quadrupled—lost—lost—lost. I exhausted my allowance, liberal as it was; I drained my indulgent parents, under false pretences, and then took up money at usurious interest. Still, still, all had been well, or at least ruin had been prevented, had I desisted then. But who ever heard of a losing gamester stopping short of ruin?

“ Meanwhile Stanislaus abandoned me and sided with my adversaries. This did not appear to be very friendly, but I consoled myself with the fact, that he was thereby rescued from that ruin which was fast overtaking me. At last, grown desperate with continued losses, I risked every-

thing in one venture ; at one throw of the dice I staked all the property to which I was entitled upon the death of my father. The throw was fatal, and I was utterly ruined.

“How I staggered out of this pandemonium—how I found my way home, I know not ; but I recollect that just after I had played my last stake, the young Orsini gave me a letter, which he had forgotten to deliver sooner. My brain seemed to be on fire—I threw myself in bitterness and anguish on my couch, and putting my hand mechanically into my pocket, drew out the letter. It was from Sophia Orsini, and was delivered to the young count by a stranger, with the strictest injunctions to deliver it on the instant and to bid me read it without a moment’s delay. Judge of my feelings when I read what follows :—

“‘Otho ! dear Otho ! You are on the verge of a precipice. One more step and nothing can save you. Stop this instant ! fly from the scene as from the plague. I have involuntarily been privy to a private conference between my father and mother who entered the room, and did not observe me seated in a recess. What do I feel in making this disclosure ? but I cannot save you by any other means. Yet for my sake bear no hostility towards them. Your ruin has long been planned ; you are the son of the man whom my father hates, and your ruin alone can gratify his revenge. You have been enticed to the gaming-table. To-night the last great

blow is to be struck, which is to complete your ruin. I give you this warning ; may it arrive in time.

‘SOPHIA.’

“Lost ! lost Otho ! Had I received the note but one minute before I seized the fatal dice—but one minute—I had not been the veriest wretch that ever crawled upon the earth. The thought maddened me, and, without allowing a moment’s time for reflection, I resolved to go at once to the Orsini palace. I flew rather than walked—I rushed by the porter into the hall—I roared out the names of the father and son, and brought them both into the hall—I poured out the bitterest upbraidings, heaped curse upon curse, and would have rushed upon the son, had not the servants closed upon me, and thrown me to the ground. They then bound me, and carried me to my hotel, with strict injunctions not to leave me. I struggled—I blasphemed—I invoked the direst vengeance on the heads of the count and his son, till at last I sank down exhausted by my efforts and the anguish of my mind. For two days I remained in a stupor, stunned and confused, recollecting generally that a great calamity had overwhelmed me, but unable to remember the details. Upon the third day I became more calm. I thought of my parents, and wept. They were balmy tears, acting like the dew upon the parched flower. They refreshed my brain.

“Towards the evening of the third day some of the Doge’s officers came to my hotel, and arrested me upon a charge of treason. I did not make the slightest resistance,—it would have been useless, and they hurried me to the state prison over the Bridge of Sighs. Being immediately conveyed to a dungeon, I was left there, as I believed, to perish.

“In proportion as my situation became more desolate, in proportion as all hope abandoned me, I was more humble and resigned, only praying that my parents might remain ignorant of my fate. From the dungeons of Venice light is altogether excluded, and it is only conjectured to be day when the jailer brings the wretched food which is to keep soul and body together, till he returns after the lapse of twenty-four hours. I had no means of computing time, and did not know till afterwards that I had remained in the dungeon six months. I was then ordered before the Secret Conclave, and being told that there was no further charge against me, was ordered to be set at liberty. Hopeless as I had been of release, and still clinging to life, I could not yet refrain from demanding the cause of my unjust punishment, and the names of those who had brought so infamous an accusation against me. ‘The Conclave does not suffer itself to be questioned,’ was the only reply.

“Being conveyed on board a gondola, I was carried to the Austrian minister’s, who expected me; but no sooner did he set eyes upon me, than he started back in amazement, so

much had imprisonment altered me. He immediately gave the necessary orders, and, by soothing attentions, soon produced an improvement in my health and appearance. But all cheerfulness had forsaken me; I have never experienced a happy moment since. In the course of conversation with the minister, I was informed that my dear father had been in search of me three months after my arrest. He waited upon his excellency, who could not give him any information. He attempted to procure an interview with his wife's relations. He entreated them in the most moving terms to give him some intelligence respecting me. They refused to see him, and sent back his letters unopened.

“ My first impression was to return instantly to my parents; but an uncontrollable desire to find out the authors of my imprisonment, and wreak on them a just vengeance, stifled for a time all the dictates of love and duty.

“ My strength, however, not being sufficiently restored, I remained with the minister, and was at length informed of the cause of my imprisonment and of my liberation. The minister had contracted an intimate friendship with the family of Vincenti, which had given several Doges to Venice, and which had always been at variance with the Orsini.—One of those feuds was handed down as an heirloom from generation to generation. But the Vincenti family were as amiable and good as the Orsini were haughty and revengeful. The Duke Vincenti was the present Doge, and he had a son with whom the Austrian chargé d'affaires was very

intimate. He had often done me the honour to speak of me to the young duke, reprobating the enmity of the Orsini, and suspecting that some scheme of vengeance had been the cause of my sudden disappearance. The young duke, struck with the account given him, made some comments, and soon afterwards took his leave. The next time he saw the minister, he informed him that he had not been idle, but, by great intercession with the Doge, had discovered that I had been arrested on a charge of a plot against the state, brought by the Orsini, father and son. The Austrian minister might now, without disclosing the name of his informant, interfere, in his ministerial capacity, and claim the release or trial of a subject of the Germanic empire, whom the Emperor, his master, was bound to protect. Accordingly he presented a strong remonstrance to the Doge, who naturally enquired the source from whence he derived his information. The question was evaded by a general reply, that bad men were not always true to themselves, one rogue being always false to another when his demands were not complied with. The minister pledged himself that the accusation was altogether infamous and false. An order for my liberation was then granted without delay.

“My blood, as you may well conceive, boiled at the brutality and baseness of my relations. But Sophia Orsini! Sophia! Has anything happened to that dear and gentle being,—has she been persecuted on my account?

“The minister evaded my question, begging me not to exhaust my strength by any further conversation. I saw there was some horrible story which he would fain conceal. I expressed my suspicions; I should draw the most dreadful inferences from his silence. I implored him not to keep me in suspense worse than the most dreadful certainty. The agitation in which he saw me prevailed on him at last to disclose the truth.

“Years have since elapsed, and my mind has disciplined itself to the belief, that the evils we endure in this world are but trials to fit us for the next. But long, long as the interval has been, I never recur to that dreadful day without feeling some of the agony which had well nigh deprived me of reason. My poor Sophia had been assured that my sudden disappearance was the consequence of a scandalous intrigue with the wife of a nobleman who had received me with the utmost hospitality. She fell from her chair as if struck by death, and for hours remained unconscious of everything and every one about her. Then, when she recovered, she exclaimed, ‘It is false! it is a foul and odious calumny! Otho is incapable of such baseness!’ The treacherous father and son had expected this, and offered to bring a person of undoubted veracity who had been in my company and that of the lady at Milan, where I was leading a life of the utmost gaiety, and where he had heard me make merry at the manner in which I had concealed my attachment to the lady I

had eloped with, by pretending to be in love with one of the Orsini family. My poor Sophia was not proof against all these artifices. All innocence herself, she had no suspicion of such baseness ; she could not believe that the human heart could be so utterly depraved. Still she struggled hard to discredit the calumny, for her heart assured her I could not be the villain they represented me, and yet a person was produced who confirmed the infamous story they had fabricated. She would not yet give me up ; she would write to me, and have under my own hands the avowal of my perfidy. So reasonable a demand could not be objected to, and the letter was written. Whatever it was I never saw it ; it never was intended that I should. It was entrusted to the person who had been brought forward to sustain the falsehood I have just mentioned. In due course of time he returned as if from the journey he had undertaken. He represented that he had found me, not without difficulty, at Genoa, where I was keeping the most dissolute company, and got the letter into my hands. I had no sooner opened it, than I burst into a laugh, and insisted upon reading it to my companions, commenting indelicately upon different passages, and desiring, when I had finished it, that it might be enclosed in an envelope and sent back to the lady. I had thus profaned the delicacy of her confidence,—made her the jest of the dissolute. I had not vouchsafed a single line, but returned her own letter with contempt and derision.

Such an outrage was unparalleled, intolerable. She heard them not, she replied not, but sat mute and motionless, every faculty of mind and body stunned and benumbed. 'It is enough,' she at last exclaimed, and was carried senseless out of the room. Her illness was long and dangerous; but the excellence of her constitution triumphed, and she was slowly restored to health. But it was not the intention of her father and brother that she should remain in the bosom of her family, quiet and unmolested. Whilst she remained unmarried, the hatred they bore me could not be gratified.

"I cannot go over the details of that system of treachery by which, still blackening my character, they tried to divert her affections into another channel. Long, long did she struggle against them. Her love survived her esteem for me, and though her virtue had cast me off for ever, her heart cherished still those feelings of tenderness which are rarely, if ever, extinguished.

"Oh fond and faithful heart of woman, which, giving its affections slowly, retains them as long as pulse can beat and heart can feel; which bears adversity with fortitude, when it can share it with the object of its affection; which has no joy that it does not communicate, and no grief which it would not willingly conceal. Oh timid and tender heart! how often are thy feelings lacerated, and thy fondness and affection abused! Parents, home, comfort, very life itself—how often dost

thou sacrifice them all that thy vows of love and truth
may be fulfilled !

“ By dint of entreaties, that were never suffered to be relaxed, the unhappy Sophia, beset on all sides, and assured that her consent would restore happiness to the family, was prevailed upon at length to receive the addresses of Count Spontani, and —

“ ‘ And she consented to marry him ? ’ I said.

“ ‘ They were married yesterday.’

“ I sprung from the couch like a maniac. I clenched my hands as if I would bury my nails in the flesh. I tore the hair from my head, and was guilty of the most frantic excesses. I uttered the most dreadful curses. I menaced every member of the family;—Spontani should not separate me from my beloved. Rage, agony, and despair filled my soul by turns. My brain seemed to be on fire; my heart beat as though it would burst, and if I touched my forehead my hand appeared to scorch it.

“ Such is the brief and feeble description of the torture I endured. The minister never checked me. He suffered the passion to have its vent, and then, persuading me to take some rest, had me bled copiously. After a few hours of troubled sleep, I was bled again, and thus probably madness was prevented. Meanwhile his Excellency exhausted every effort to make me bear with fortitude that which now was without remedy. I listened to him in silence, which probably he mistook for conviction. I was

too weak to pursue the conversation further. I did not attempt to controvert any of his arguments, and he drew thence an omen of my speedy recovery. I saw his delusion, but did not make any effort to remove it, for I had formed in my mind a project of a most desperate nature.

“ Whilst the good minister fancied I was gaining strength and fortitude, I was brooding over my design, which occupied every thought and every moment of the day. After I had arranged everything, and was sufficiently recovered to travel, I took leave of my benefactor. Bruised and broken as my heart was, it overflowed with gratitude when I took my leave. He had been to me the only friend I ever had, except my parents, and I was to see him no more. The parting was not without pain on his side, but it was softened by the belief that I was going to seek in the arms of my parents rest and refuge from the storms which had thus early wrecked the happiness of my life. I set out on my journey attended by one faithful domestic. But we halted a few miles from the palace which belonged to the Orsini, and which had so recently been the scene of Sophia’s marriage.

“ I procured the dress of a Carmelite monk, such as I now wear, and after writing two letters, and arming myself, set out for the Orsini palace. I left my domestic behind, directing him to wait at a particular spot with the horses.

“ It was now that I was called upon to bend up each

corporal and mental faculty to the great project I had in hand, and which I knew would be attended with imminent danger to my own life, as well as to the lives of others. My wrongs were great, but my vengeance I felt to be just, and I prayed, naturally enough, that it might be effectual.

“As I approached the palace, my mind was sickened by the spectacle of amusements and fêtes, dances and mummeries, and every sport incidental to merry-making. I rang at the gates, and, on being asked my business, said that I had affairs of importance to communicate, and which concerned the whole family.

“‘It is a strange time, good father,’ said the porter, ‘for mysterious revelations.’

“‘I know it, my son, but we, who have little to do with the joys and pleasures of life, must perform our duty when we can, and without waiting for the convenience of man.’

“He made no further remark, but escorted me to the vestibule, and charged a page or lacquey with my message. Here I remained a full half-hour. At length the major-domo was sent to me and conducted me into a magnificent saloon. I could not avoid an involuntary start as I entered, for I perceived at one glance that the count and his son, with Sophia and her husband, were there assembled. I was almost overcome, for the first words I heard were from Sophia:—

“ ‘The good father seems unwell ; pray lead him to a seat.’

“ I bowed my thanks but could not speak.

“ ‘ You have business of importance to our family,’ said the count. His voice at once aroused me, and restored me to the full possession of my faculties. ‘ We are assembled to celebrate the marriage of our beloved daughter. We crave your blessing, holy father, on her marriage, and upon the whole family.’

“ I rose as if in silent prayer, and then seating myself, fixed a steady look upon each. There was no fear that I should be recognized ; sorrow, imprisonment, and sickness had so reduced my form, and changed my features, that had my mother beheld me at that moment ‘she had not known her child.’

“ ‘ I am a man, count, of many sorrows and many wrongs, have been falsely accused, unjustly imprisoned, and basely calumniated, and all because of an ancient feud between two powerful families.’

“ As I said this I fixed my eyes upon him, but he did not appear to apply the observation in any way whatever to himself, or to those around him.

“ ‘ Upon a charge of disaffection to the state, which was fabricated against me, I was thrown into the state prison at Venice. There victims may die a lingering death without knowing or suspecting the charge against them, or the authors of it. It has been said even, but I cannot believe it, that families have contrived to get

rid of obnoxious members, by accusations which had never been submitted to the formality of any judicial proceeding or trial.'

COUNT ORSINI.—"We know the government of Venice to be wise and merciful. It seeks the fullest information before it acts, and never punishes till it has ascertained beyond a doubt the guilt of the accused. Our paternal and excellent government must not be maligned."

THE MONK.—"Far be it from me, my lord, but the best governments are not free from the frailties of human nature, and it may happen tha their ears may be abused by false and scandalous accusations."

"The father and son exchanged looks of surprise.

THE COUNT.—"All this, holy father, may be true or false, but in what way does it concern your business with the Orsini family? We are somewhat impatient to know, and time presses!"

THE MONK.—"It does indeed, and must not be lost. Life and death depend upon the lapse of moments.' I spoke in a louder tone than usual.

"I am commissioned, my lord, by a most unhappy father and mother to make enquiries after the fate of their son, their only son; and demand of you, where is Count Otho Winceslaus?"

"Both father and son felt or affected surprise and anger.

THE COUNT.—"Holy father, profane not your lips with his name; he has forfeited the esteem of all good men,

insulted our house, and destroyed the peace of an illustrious nobleman by the seduction of his wife.'

THE MONK.—"Poor Otho!"

"The countess seemed surprised at this expression of pity.

THE MONK.—"Unhappy Otho! did he insult your family, my lord, when your son selected him as his companion to the gaming-house,—your son, who delivered him a letter just too late to save him from ruin?"

"The countess seemed to feel increasing interest.

"And did he not select a strange asylum in which to plot his scheme of seduction? Is the dungeon of a prison the favoured temple of love?"

"The count started from his seat. 'The dungeon of a prison! you speak in riddles, holy father. What has the family of the Orsini in common with that receptacle for traitors? But, Sophia, the conversation distresses you—this is not fit discourse for you; let me beg of you, my love, to retire.'

SOPHIA.—"My lord, it is my wish to remain. In this, at least, I will decide for myself." Her look and manner surprised them.

THE MONK.—"The unfortunate Count Otho was immured within a prison; and if any here may be anxious to know at whose instigation, I believe I shall be able to satisfy them."

THE COUNT.—"Our anxiety is that we may never more hear mention of his name."

THE MONK.—“‘I do not doubt it. I am here by the desire and authority of the Doge.’

THE COUNT.—“‘The Doge !’

THE MONK.—“‘Yes, my lord ; he knows the peculiar interest you take in everything connected with the family of Otho Winceslaus, and has enabled me to gratify your curiosity.’

THE COUNT.—“‘The Doge !’ and the features of both father and son indicated increased anxiety. But they did not attempt to interrupt me.

“‘When the unfortunate Otho was confined in the dungeon, his illness returned. Confinement, the want of light and air, aggravated his disorder to such an extent, that, feeling his fate was sealed, he implored the jailer to suffer the last consolations of religion to be administered to him. By dint of intercession, and with great difficulty, I was permitted to visit him. So changed was he by illness, that you would not have recognised his likeness to your *beloved* sister. He was calm and resigned, though scarcely able to raise his head.’ The look of anguish which the countess fixed upon me shook every nerve, and I was obliged to pause for a few seconds.

“‘I received his confession. At that awful moment all speak the truth, as all hope for pardon. But he had no heavy sins to answer for, no pardon to solicit for the crimes of calumny, fraud, unnatural hatred or malice. He lamented, but forgave, the unprovoked enmity of his rela-

tions ; and finally, after many efforts, wrote two letters, which he charged me to deliver in person. One is addressed to the Count Orsini, the other to Sophia Orsini.'

THE COUNT.—" 'Deliver them.'

THE MONK.—" 'Not so, my lord. Another injunction was, that the letter should be read by myself, and I dare not disobey a dying injunction. The letter to the Count Orsini is as follows :—

" 'From the dungeon of the state prison I address the Count Orsini. It is the voice of one speaking from the grave, and demands of the count, as he shall answer in that awful presence before which he will soon be summoned, why he has pursued the son of his unoffending sister with such relentless malice,—why he plotted with his own son the ruin of his nephew,—what crime that nephew had committed which deserved a loathsome imprisonment and a lingering death? He demands to know what cause that nephew had given for the hatred which could only be gratified by a charge of treason that he knew to be false?

" 'I, Otho Winceslaus, pronounce, with my latest breath, the Counts Orsini, father and son, to be base and infamous calumniators.'

" Both of them immediately started up, and laid their hands upon their swords.

“‘Be more calm, gentlemen; would you draw upon an unarmed monk?’

“‘I, Otho Winceslaus, pronounce again and again the Count Orsini and his son to be base and infamous calumniators; and I charge you, the younger Orsini, with having suborned the most depraved characters to compass my ruin by the basest practices. I accuse the father with having transmitted to the government charges of treason fabricated by himself, in the hope that they might involve me either in an ignominious death or a lingering captivity.

“‘Calumniators and assassins! I summon you to the bar of God!

“‘OTHO WINCESLAUS.’

“The father and son got up and paced the room with a hurried step. There was an awful pause; a shudder, as if they expected the author of this awful summons to appear in person. Sophia Orsini looked as if grief and surprise had petrified her. I now read the second letter:—

“‘To SOPHIA ORSINI.

“‘And does Sophia, dearest Sophia, unite with the calumniators of Otho? Does she not pronounce in her own heart that he who aspired to her love could not be a false friend, a seducer of innocence, and a traitor? No, no! she has been deceived; she has been made to believe, by perjured evidence and forged documents, that her Otho had

betrayed the confidence of his friend, seduced the affections of his wife, herded with the dissolute and base, and made even the object of his affections the sport and jest of the mean and worthless.

“ ‘ Sophia, dearest and only-beloved Sophia, call upon your father and brother to produce this friend whom Otho has injured, and whose wife he has seduced. Where are they? Who are they? They are nowhere; they have no existence.

“ ‘ Sophia, in another world we shall be re-united. Farewell!

“ ‘ OTHO WINCESLAUS.’

“ I will not, for I cannot, describe the effect which this letter produced upon Sophia. A scene of unparalleled wickedness had been suddenly laid open in all its horrible deformity. She tried to speak, but could not. At length she poured forth the bitterest reproaches against her relations. She cursed her own credulity; she would instantly fly to the Doge; she would seek her own Otho in his dungeon, lay down by him and die. Oh what a moment was this! I hid my face in my cowl to hide the scalding tears. Courage, anger, vengeance all yielded to the depth and bitterness of sorrow. A low sweet tone broke upon my ear, and that hand, which I had so often pressed in the warmth of love and truth, was laid upon mine.

“ ‘ And he died in his dungeon?’

“‘No, Lady Sophia, God for His own good purposes has spared him.’

THE COUNTESS.—“‘He is alive, then! Father of mercy, thou didst not let him perish! And thou wilt still live, Otho, for thy Sophia!’

“The recollection of the obstacle that now existed rushed upon her, and she fell into the arms of Spontani.

“Caution, prudence, were at once forgotten. I dashed the table from between us, snatched her from the arms of Spontani, and placed her unconscious head on my shoulder, whilst I pressed her in my arms. It was a moment of happiness, and it was the last. I have never known one since.

“Whilst she remained in this senseless state, she was removed to her chamber by her husband, and I saw her no more.

“The scene now approached its conclusion. It was not in human nature to prolong it. The count accelerated it by his own audacity and presumption.

“‘Holy father!’ he exclaimed, ‘Wicked men find it easy to impose upon the unsuspecting and the good. You have been made a dupe. The letters are a tissue of slander and falsehood, intended to wound the peace of an illustrious family. Would that I could summon this Otho Winceslaus into the presence of its indignant members!’

THE MONK.—“‘He obeys the summons on the instant,’ said I, and threw off my cowl and habit. Now was the time for action. I discarded all moderation, and gave rein

to all my rage and vengeance. The count and his son recoiled as if they had been suddenly assailed by the lion of the desert. They would have retired but I prevented them. ‘He dies who stirs a foot!’ They made no further effort, and had then to bear the storm that had been gathering against them.

“‘Look on me, sirs! Do you not quail before me—does not the recollection of your mean and treacherous practices cover you with infamy and shame?’

“Whether these expressions galled them, or whether it was that their desperate situation gave them courage, I know not; but they retorted upon me a bold defiance, drew their swords, and attacked me. My wishes were now gratified, as I considered myself a match for both, and thirsted for revenge.

“We fought with great fury and determination, the fearful odds of two to one being barely counterbalanced by my superior skill in the use of the sword. The desperation, however, which a keen remembrance of the wrongs I, in common with my father and mother, had suffered at the hands of these men, gave vigour to my arm, and stirred up my soul to compass their destruction. After several ineffectual passes on both sides, in which the remarkable quickness I had displayed in defending myself against their combined attack appeared utterly to confound my antagonists, I perceived a move on the part of the younger Orsini intended to place him in a position behind me, so as

to enable him to attack me in the rear, whilst the count should be engaging my attention in front. Quick as thought, I hastily retreated a few paces, and planted my back against the wall. Foiled in his dastardly design, the young Orsini again took up ground behind his father, who, at that moment, was pressing me hard with a succession of well-directed thrusts, till at length, by a skilful parry made in tierce, I fortunately disarmed him; but as, unfortunately, my own sword was broken in the act. The count (who had repossessed himself of his sword the instant he discovered that my own was rendered useless) came wildly on with a mixed and diabolical expression of fury and delight in his countenance, as I stood at his mercy, erect and helpless against the wall. In a twinkling I should have received the point of his sword in my body (as he was now within three paces of me); but, maddened by my misfortune, and with the prospect of instant death before me, I instinctively hurled the fragment of my sword at him. The hilt struck him full in the face, and with such prodigious force that, for the moment, he was quite stunned by the blow. By a vigorous bound, and a still more vigorous grasp, I secured possession of his sword, and replaced myself in my old position against the wall. The son now rushed on me with the fury of a tiger; but this very impetuosity proved my salvation. Not having time to parry his terrific lunge, I moved about a foot to the left in order to avoid its effects. Unable to recover himself in his head-

long attack, his rapier shivered to atoms against the wall, whilst my own, in an oblique direction, was thrust into his side. He fell a lifeless corpse, pierced by the very sword which but a few moments before his father was wielding for my destruction.

“The disgrace of the count, and the death of his son, now sufficed for my revenge. I sheathed my sword, resumed my monk’s cowl and habit, walked out of the palace of the Orsini, and proceeded to the spot where I had appointed my servant to meet me. I found him there ready with the horses. Throwing off my disguise, I mounted one of the horses, and turned towards my home, but not with that joy and alacrity which would have hurried me onwards had I been carrying back with me the feelings of love and endearment with which I had left it. No! I was now returning there without a hope for the future, and with scarcely a wish for the present,—like the wretched exile, who

“‘Triste iter instituit, fatis vexatus inquis,
Et proferre pedes, et retinere timet,’

I lingered on the road, absorbed in a reverie of thought both as to the doubtful character of the vengeance I had gratified, and the questionable approval with which a recital of the details would be received by my unhappy parents. At length the venerable château broke upon my sight, and called up to my bewildered imagination a melancholy retrospect of the past and direful forebodings

of the future. I had taken care to apprise my parents of my release from prison, and now added the precaution of sending forward a letter to the almoner of the household to break to them the intelligence of my approach. As I neared the drawbridge I discerned my dear parents walking with slow and feeble tread upon the terrace, and supporting each other, as though they were both bowed down with grief. They had long lived in ignorance of my fate, and in hourly expectation of receiving the sad tidings of my death; and, though that doubt had now been removed, the constantly recurring phantom had made such inroads upon their health that no after-joy could remedy. I had determined to make a full confession of everything that had occurred since my departure. They listened to my story with feelings alternating between surprise and anger on the one hand, and reproach and pity on the other. I did not omit, in this painful narrative, a single circumstance, however distressing its recital; nor did I attempt to palliate a single act, however strong might have been the presumption of its justice in my favour. When I had concluded my sad tale, they each embraced me with a fervour and an earnestness that bespoke the gladness of their hearts at my return, and showed that their affection for me still remained unchanged and undiminished.

“Four months had passed away since my return to the château, and in this interval I sought by every means in my power to alleviate the sorrows of my poor mother,

and to heal the cankerous ravages which had evidently been long undermining the vital powers of my unhappy father. The circumstances of his own early life, embittered by a recollection of the injuries and injustice done to my mother by the members of her own family, and the protraction of this unnatural feud into another generation, had sown the seeds of a disease, the progress of which nothing could now avert; indeed it proved fatal within a few days. My dear mother and myself received his parting words, which contained instructions for our conduct after his decease. He then placed my mother's hand in mine, and charged us to comfort and sustain each other. All fortitude now gave way under the agony of this parting scene. He raised himself up for a moment, gazed affectionately on my mother and myself, and then fell back and expired. In less than two months afterwards I had laid my mother by his side, and was left alone in the world, the object of my fondest affection, if not dead, being now the wife of another.

“With my subsequent history you are already in a great measure acquainted, from the part I took in the marriage, trial, and conviction of the infamous Baron de Lauerstadt. I have for years lived the life of a recluse, and shall continue to do so until I am called to another and a happier world. You are still young, and have all the active pursuits of life open to your energies and your ambition, with its hopes and aspirations as yet

unassailed by misfortune, unchecked by persecution, and unstained by crime. My son, the darkening shadows of adversity have not yet reached you; the pangs of disappointed love have not yet seared your young heart; and the ungoverned impulses of a revengeful and unbridled passion have not yet steeped your hands in blood. God grant that none of these calamities may ever overtake you! Farewell! Following this road for the distance of about one hundred and fifty yards you will arrive at what was once the falconer's lodge; at the back of this ruin you will see a flight of steps, now overgrown with ivy, and at the foot of them a narrow and precipitous path, crossed here and there by tangled brushwood, which will conduct you to the main road leading to Darmstadt. I must return to the château *alone*; so farewell, my son! farewell!"

LEAF THE FOURTH.

THE SIX PROMISES.



SOON after the interview with Father Anselm, which led to the disclosure of the sad events of his life, I went to Darmstadt upon business, where I remained some time with M. de Montcalm, who introduced me to his wife and sister. They were amiable persons, particularly Madame de Montcalm, who had uncommon animation, much archness of expression, and a frankness of manner, to which I was indebted for one of the most extraordinary narratives I ever recollect, which had occurred to a friend of hers :—

The Count and Countess de Fronsard were married very early. It was one of those love matches which disdain to listen to the dictates of discretion, and brook neither opposition nor delay; advice under such circumstances being merely a waste of feeling. To doubt the duration of such a passion were treason to the divinity of love.

On the ground of respectability or fortune, there could be no objection. It was only suggested to them to wait

till the count had attained his majority. Wait two whole years ! Two centuries ! A convenient illness, which the count had about this time, produced as he insinuated by grief at so long a delay, but really brought about by exposure to cold, alarmed the parents of both to such a degree, that, as soon as he recovered, the happy couple were united.

Death only was to extinguish the purity and brightness of the hymeneal torch, and the world was to witness a miracle of unabated constancy and love.

All violent passions are necessarily of short duration, and the passion of love has never yet furnished an exception. The count was gay, fond of company, danced gracefully, wrote pretty sonnets, and was particularly anxious to be the object of female admiration. The countess was at first not displeased. She thought the praises bestowed upon her husband were so many panegyries upon her own taste and judgment. She felt, as every one envied her the possession of such a husband, that she had made the happiest choice. She loved him with a sincerity which knew no abatement and harboured no suspicion. On her side it may be said, that the passion, if it had lost some of its intensity, had retained all its purity. But the ardour of the lover did not long survive in the character of the husband, and ere a year had elapsed the tender sonnet-writer had established an interest in other hearts which at length became too apparent to escape the observa-

tion of the countess. Thank heaven! I am unable, from my own experience, to describe the feelings of a fond and faithful wife upon the first discovery of her husband's alienated affections. But, from what I observed in the conduct of my friend, they must be terrible. She remonstrated, but it was gently, and she had the good sense to avoid all that bitterness of reproach which aggravates the evil it is meant to remedy. The agony of her feelings threw her into an alarming illness, and nothing was more remarkable during its continuance than the constant solicitude for her recovery expressed by all those who were the objects of the count's tender attention. She was at length ordered to the baths of Carlsbad, but insisted that the count should avail himself of the period of her absence to make a tour, which he had meditated before his marriage.

The count and countess had set out for their respective destinations about three months, when a courier brought me a dispatch containing two letters, one addressed to the count, the other to myself. They were from the countess, and contained the affectionate farewell of one who evidently felt that she had not long to live. In them too she had given directions to be buried in a distant part, which should remain a secret from every one. She was alone in the world, for she had outlived her husband's affections, and the grave which was to receive her unconscious remains should be for ever unknown. This was the pur-

port of both letters. But the letter to the count, after bestowing her blessing and forgiveness, charged him not to return from his tour with the intention of paying any tribute, or raising any monument to her memory.

At the expiration of a year from the receipt of the countess's last letter, the count returned home.

I am indebted to a friend who accompanied him for the detail of the incidents consequent upon his return, and I cannot render them more *piquant* than by giving them to you in a dramatic dress.

“ Well ! ” exclaimed the count, “ here we are at home again, and a new career of enjoyment, a new vista of pleasure is opened. I feel the life blood dance more cheerily through my veins, the pulse beats quicker. Courage, Conrad, we are returned from travel improved in appearance, manners, fashion, and knowledge of the world.”

But ever and anon a recollection of the wife who had been the grace and ornament of his home would rush across his mind and dim the brightness of his hopes. It was but for a moment ; the unwelcome recollection was soon banished, and gaiety and dissipation resumed their power. The return of the count was celebrated by fêtes and rejoicings, and by none more heartily than by those who had been the heroines of his sonnets, and the objects of his admiration. He had been released *a vinculo matrimonii*,—was a widower, free to make another

choice, and to raise some other aspirant to the envied distinction of being his bride. Every female heart fluttered whenever he appeared; he was the centre round which they all moved, and every eye solicited the preference of his notice.

“Conrad!” said the count, “is not this happiness? There is not one of these who would not rush at once into my arms. I read their wishes, I feel my power, in every glance; each is convinced that she shall be the chosen one, for each has a promise, should the time ever arrive when I should be enabled to fulfil it.”

“And how can it be fulfilled to each?” enquired Conrad.

“Impossible!” replied the count, “and therefore it shall not be performed to any; but as they all live in hope, none meanwhile will suffer me to despair.”

“But the time must come,” continued Conrad, “when this scene of deception can be practised no longer. It is unworthy of your character, and may be dangerous to your life.”

“How?”

“Have they not fathers or brothers? will they submit tamely to so gross an insult?”

“Twill be time enough to think of that hereafter; but if I am reluctant to fulfil the promises to one sex, I will not disappoint the wishes of the other.”

“And the murder of the brothers is to atone for the breach of faith to the sisters! It is a disgraceful business, and altogether unworthy of my friend.”

Such were the discussions which took place between the count and his friend. They were without the least effect upon the count.

But it must be obvious that such a career could not be long continued with impunity, and that the termination of it would probably end in blood. The *dénouement* arrived sooner than Conrad had anticipated.

It was in the midst of a joyous party, when gloomy thoughts and unwelcome recollections are least likely to intrude themselves, that a letter was delivered to the count, who, merely looking at the address, put it into his pocket. Another, and another followed, till the number amounted to six. They were all laid aside unread, for nothing was to disturb the gaiety of the hour. The company at length separated, and Conrad and the count were left together.

“The letters! the letters!” said Conrad. “You are the fortunate centre of attraction. They are all, I suppose, from sighing damsels who weep over broken vows. Ah, faithless swain! too soon believed! Read! Read!”

The count confirmed by his exulting looks the supposition of his friend, and, conceiving that he should excite his envy, read them aloud.

The first was as follows:—

“To THE COUNT DE FRONSARD.

“**MY LORD,**

“My dear sister has just made me acquainted with the promise of marriage given her by your lordship, to be fulfilled whenever circumstances should permit. You are a widower, and I am anxious to see my sister forthwith raised to the rank of your lordship’s wife, to which she will do such honour. I need not add how proud I shall be to salute you as my brother-in-law.”

“Very like the epistle of a sighing damsel,” said the count.

“And if you do not comply with its demand, what then?”

“Defiance—a duel. But I will not be bullied even if I am not in such a hurry to be saluted as the brother-in-law of my redoubtable correspondent, ‘whose sister’ will do such honour to the rank of my lordship.”

“But,” said Conrad, “he has the feelings of a brother. Put yourself in his situation, and think you had a sister.”

“Conrad! Conrad! wear the cowl instead of the sword! But we have more to read. What says the second letter?”

“To THE COUNT DE FRONSARD.

“I think, my lord, you will hardly hesitate which of two alternatives you will accept. Either marry my sister, to whom you have promised marriage, or give her brother the satisfaction to which he shall feel himself entitled.

But I have no doubt you will eagerly fulfil your promise to a lady capable of rendering the marriage state so happy."

This letter galled him to the quick. "But I will *not* eagerly fulfil my promise, though the lady be capable of 'rendering the marriage state so happy.' Zounds ! Conrad, they treat me as if I were to be pressed into marriage, like a beast into harness."

After giving vent to his rage against the writer, he opened the third letter, the fourth, fifth, and sixth. They were all from the brothers of different females, and all in the same tone.

There was something so extraordinary in the coincidence of their being delivered on the same day, that I was curious to ascertain the cause.

I found that at a public ball, where all the ladies were present, an old countess had expressed some surprise at the absence of the count. "But I dare say," she added, "he is better employed in courting his intended. I hear he is going to be married to Mademoiselle de ——," naming a young lady who was not known to any of the count's *coterie*.

"Impossible !" exclaimed one ; "Impossible !" echoed another. "Impossible ! impossible !" ran quickly along the whole line. But the old countess, whether from spite or actual belief in the truth of her assertion, repeated it more positively, and dejection began to take place immediately in the ball room. One young lady withdrew ; then another, and

another, till all who had such particular interest in the fate of the count had returned to their respective homes. There, it appears, that each of them made her brother acquainted with the promise which the count had given her. The letters were the immediate consequence of such disclosure.

As it was late in the evening before the letters had undergone the discussion which naturally ensued, the count deferred any notice of them till next morning. He was evidently alarmed at the predicament in which he was placed. Trifling was entirely out of the question. He must either marry or fight, and he had as little inclination for the former as the latter; not that he wanted courage, but he was placed in a situation from which he could not extricate himself with honour. If he married, it would be imputed to fear; and, besides, he could only fulfil his promise to one of the six. If he refused, and fought, he incurred the imputation of seeking the life of the brother, rather than of redeeming his promise to the sister. He could only propitiate one brother and one sister; and thus expose himself to the rage and resentment of all the rest.

These were no agreeable reflections; and a melancholy silence prevailed next morning as the two friends sat at breakfast. They had scarcely finished it when they were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who ushered in a lady in a veil. The count started back, as if some apparition had visited him.

“Do you not know me, my lord,” exclaimed the lady,

throwing aside her veil, "or am I become so odious that you start at the sight of me? It was not always thus. I am come to claim the performance of a promise which no man of honour can refuse."

"And is it, my dear madam, with such a menace that you come here to claim it?"

"It should have been performed ere now," was the reply.

The domestic entered, and conveyed some message to his master in a whisper. It discomposed him; but there was a necessity for immediate action.

"Come, my dear madam, let me conduct you into another room, where I will speedily attend you, and where we can converse more calmly and securely."

The lady permitted herself to be handed into an adjoining apartment, where the count left her.

The servant instantly introduced another lady. Her greeting was of a different kind.

"So, my dear count, I hear you are going to be married, and I suppose you meant to surprise me agreeably by withholding all information till you had made every preparation to lead me to the altar. There is a kindness, a delicacy of thought in your purpose which would not let me rest till I had thanked you in person."

"Upon my honour, my dear madam, you have taken me by surprise. I had not the least idea of marriage,—at least, of a speedy marriage. I have not been making the slightest preparation."

“Indeed, my lord ! and wherefore, then, this promise ?”

“You might have left it safely to my honour.”

The servant appeared again, and again whispered his master. “Another !” he exclaimed, in an under tone of voice.

“But this, my dear lady, is no place for such discussions ; in another room we shall be less liable to interruption.” And the lady suffered herself to be conducted into a room adjoining that to which the first lady had been consigned.

“All the plagues in Pandora’s box,” said the count, as he returned to the saloon, “seem to be poured upon me at once, and I fear that Hope is not to be found at the bottom !”

The third lady came upon the same errand, and her demand had the same *refrain* as those who had come before and those who followed after :—

“Me you promised, count, to marry ;
Gallant lover, do not tarry !”

A fourth, a fifth, a sixth, succeeded, till he might have exclaimed with Macbeth, when Banquo’s offspring pass before him at the bidding of the weird sisters,—

“A third is like the former ! . .

Why do you show me this ?—A fourth ?—Start, eyes !

What ! will the line stretch out to the crack of doom ?

Another yet ?—A seventh ?—I’ll see no more !

And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass

Which shows me many more !”

The accusations and the demands of each were in the

same strain, and the spectator might have been almost tempted to believe that they had studied their parts beforehand. Each lady was shown into a separate room on the same plea and for the same purpose, so that the six apartments which branched out of the saloon were all tenanted.

“There they are!” said the count, turning to the different rooms, “but how are they to be got rid of? Zounds! I am almost tempted to decamp, and leave them to their fate!—Or shall I brave the storm and defy them?”

He had no time for debating the point, for a military-looking man entered with little ceremony, and immediately addressed the count:—

“Your servant, my lord! I did myself the honour of troubling you with a letter last night, and not having received any written answer to it, am come ‘to receive it in person.’”

“Peremptory enough, sir, and rather over-speedy, considering the serious nature of the business in question. One does not rush into the noose of matrimony with the same *nonchalance* with which we put on our boots. Some reasonable time might have been allowed for decision.”

“Decision! my lord! The decision is already made. The promise of a man of honour is not to be evaded or to be made the subject of doubt or discussion; it must be fulfilled whenever he has the power of doing it.”

“Very clerk-like phrases, sir; very moral, good sort of sentiments. But what if I demur?”

“The thing is not to be thought of for a moment—” The speech of the indignant brother was cut short by the entrance of a servant, announcing the visit of a gentleman who insisted upon an immediate interview.

“This,” said the count, with wonderful self-possession, “this is a gentleman whom I am about to consult upon the propriety of exchanging an estate in a distant part of the Landgraviate for another which is nearer the capital; —oblige me by retiring for a few minutes.”

“Most willingly,” said the officer; and, without waiting to be conducted by the count, he entered one of the chambers into which one of the ladies had been introduced.

The gentleman who was so peremptory in his demand of admission had, as the count well knew, no business that related to sale or exchange of property. He was another angry brother who came to receive in person a reply to his letter, and to threaten vengeance if compliance with his demand were refused.

You may easily conceive that, where each had the same object in view, the language of all had a sameness which it would not be more amusing to detail than it was for the count to hear. Each, however, was in turn baulked of his colloquy by the entrance of the domestic with the demand of immediate admittance for some other gentleman. The same excuse was made which had been so successful with the first gentleman, and each sought temporary refuge in one of the ladies’ chambers. By an extraordinary and

almost ludicrous fatality, the different gentlemen took different chambers, so that at last there was a lady and a gentleman in each.

“Had not the occasion been of so serious a nature, I could have laughed,” said Conrad, “at the contrivance by which each lady had been got rid of, and afterwards paired with a gentleman whom she little expected, or desired, to see.” Then the *dénouement* could not but be full of dramatic interest. How was each hiding-place to be deprived of its tenant—how could they avoid coming in contact—and what would be the consequence of their all meeting together?

Even the count could not preserve his gravity after the sixth man had disappeared. “There they are,” he said, “a pair in each ark. Why can’t each make a match of it, and thus rid me of the whole?” The idea seemed to afford him a momentary mirth; but it soon yielded to the grave conviction that something must be done, and without delay. He paced up and down the saloon several times with a troubled step and manner. At length he formed his determination.

“Conrad, there is no alternative. I will have no separate discussions;—come all, and come at once!” He had no sooner communicated this resolution than he put it into execution. He opened each door in succession, and addressing them by their respective names, “Approach! the count desires to see you all!”

Accordingly each gentleman entered the saloon leading a lady by the hand. There was a universal burst of surprise. Exclamation followed exclamation in quick succession.—“You here! and you! and you! How astonishing!”—“And what can have brought you here?”—“And can it be you?”—“Yes, it is I; but surely you are not come for the same purpose?”—“And why not?”—“And bless me, how strange!”—“What treachery!”—“What deceit!”

These curt questions and quick replies issued so rapidly from the lips of the ladies that not a single word could be heard from any other quarter.

The gentlemen were at length enabled to make themselves heard; and, in the first instance, they did not address themselves to the count, but to each other.

“How am I to explain your being in a chamber with my sister?”—“And what am I to infer from finding you with mine?”—“And what business could have made it necessary for you to secrete yourself with Sophia?” said a third. “And how came Louise to be shut up with you?” said a fourth. The accused parties were scarcely suffered to reply. “But I did not know your sister was in that chamber.”—“Nor was I acquainted with the fact of your sister’s being here.”—“Nor did I know that Sophia was in this room, nor Louise in that.”

Accusation and reproach, crimination and recrimination, produced such confusion, that the chief business which had brought them all together was nearly forgotten. The

count and Conrad could only look on in silent amazement.

It was a scene which I never recollect without feeling an irresistible propensity to laughter. The stage never furnished a more extraordinary one.

At length the count succeeded in restoring silence and order ; and Conrad has often told me that, in delivering the following address, he did it with a gravity which seemed to be almost ludicrous, so foreign was it to the natural disposition of the count.

“Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to spare you the disagreeable task of mutual reproaches. There is no motive for them. You are all innocent towards each other, nor did one of you know beforehand of the visit which the other intended to pay me. I am the only object whom you have honoured with your letters, your visits, your menaces, and your reproaches. What is it you would have with me?”

All the ladies opened upon him at once—“What! the performance of a promise you made to me,” said the one ; “and to me,” said another ; “and to me,” said the third ; “and to me—and to me—and to me,” said the fourth, fifth, and sixth.

“What! madam,” said one, addressing the lady next her, “has he made you a promise?” “Yes, certainly, madam ; but can he have made one to you?” “Undoubtedly.” “What treachery!—what deceit!—what cruelty!—what injustice!” issued from the mouths of one and all.

The count suffered this interchange of exclamations and reproaches to subside before he resumed his address.

“ You have each, ladies, a promise of marriage, and by each of these gentlemen I am defied to the field if I do not fulfil it. Now it is quite true that I could fight each of the gentlemen ; but it is equally clear, I apprehend, that I cannot marry each of the ladies. What is to be done in such a dilemma ? I see but one way :—let all the ladies present, accompanied by all the gentlemen, do me the honour to meet me in this saloon to-morrow ; two of the gentlemen shall prepare six cards, which shall have one, two, three, four, five, and six written upon them. They shall then be sealed up and deposited in an urn, and the lady who draws No. 1 shall be the lady who shall honour me with her hand. But, if this offer be accepted, it must be clearly understood that the other promises must be delivered up and burnt ; and that I shall not be bound to accept the challenge of any of the brothers, whose sisters may have drawn the unsuccessful numbers. If, on the contrary, the offer be declined, I can only say that I shall not hold myself bound to fulfil my promise to any one ; but that I shall consider myself obliged to give satisfaction to any gentleman who may demand it. That you may be able to discuss the proposal more freely, I beg to take my leave, and to request the favour of your decision as soon as possible.”

The count and his friend immediately withdrew, and left the jury of twelve to consider their verdict.

There was something so easy in the effrontery of the count that the indignation of the gentlemen began to subside, so true it is that we are tempted to find some palliation for the vices of "a bold-faced villain." Even the ladies felt less angry.

After due consideration, the jury came to a decision. The rejection of the count's offer could not benefit any party. It was true that it would afford the gentlemen an opportunity of revenging the affront which their sisters had received. But what real advantage could result from such an opportunity, which, be it recollect, might terminate less fatally to the count than to his antagonists?

It was decided that the offer should be accepted, and that the parties should assemble next day in the count's saloon.

It must have been a curious spectacle. At the appointed hour the ladies arrived, and each seemed to vie with the others in the splendour of her attire. They had the appearance of six brides, for every one conceived that she ought to wear a dress that would be appropriate to her situation, should she have the good fortune to be No. 1. We may conceive the agitation of their feelings, and the fluttering and trembling of every bosom. How hopes and fears were mingled together; the latter predominating, for it was a lottery in which only one could gain the prize.

The count entered in full dress, whether because the ceremony required it, or because he would create more envy in the hearts of the ladies who might be the unsuccessful candidates, I will not determine. He feigned or felt an excess of admiration. He had never experienced the force of beauty more powerfully, nor could language adequately describe the feelings which now overpowered him; feelings of admiration of the charms before him, and of a sense of his own unworthiness and inferiority. "Why should one win the prize to which all are equally entitled? But it is fortunate that chance must decide, for how could I make a selection where each has such power to captivate?"

A speech so adapted to the meridian of female vanity, could not fail to render the count an object of more interest, and give more intensity to the wish of each, that No. 1 might be her happy portion.

The numbers were prepared, sealed up, and deposited in the fatal urn. The brothers were ranged on one side the pedestal on which the urn was placed, whilst the count led each lady from her seat to take her station at the other. There were downcast looks and gentle throbings, and half-breathed sighs and blushes, as he conducted each, pressing the hand which trembled within his, and which by an answering pressure, told him of the hopes and wishes, and of the deep, deep interest with which each awaited the event.

The urn had been uncovered, and the sealed packets were on the point of being drawn, when a sudden noise at the other end of the saloon directed the general attention, and suspended the drawing.

The folding doors which led from the saloon to the armoury, were thrown open with violence, and a female dressed in mourning, her face wholly concealed by a veil, walked slowly to the pedestal, and placing her hand upon the urn, exclaimed, "Hold! stop this unhallowed ceremony! I have a prior promise!"

Amazement for a moment deprived the ladies, the brothers, and even the count, of speech.

"A prior promise!" exclaimed at once all the ladies, "a prior promise!—this is adding mockery to injustice." "Treacherous," "deceitful," "perjured," were amongst the epithets profusely lavished upon the count, whilst the brothers proceeded to more serious action. The arrangement must now be considered to be no longer binding, and the count must be prepared to meet from each the vengeance he had provoked.

The count meanwhile appeared more surprised than any one of the company. He denied that he had ever given a prior promise; he knew not the intruder, and he dared her to produce the promise.

For a time the veiled lady seemed to contemplate the scene with silent satisfaction. She then took from the urn each of the sealed packets, which she destroyed,

whilst all looked on without making any effort to prevent her. Immediately afterwards she deposited some document in the urn and placed her arm round it.

“Think you,” she said, “I have such written promises as yours, more valueless than the paper they were written on? My promise has been recorded at the altar of the living God: my rights have been sanctioned by law, and depend not upon an idle lottery and chance. Who dares to dispute them? Let the count read the document he will find deposited in the urn!”

The interest of the moment was raised to the highest pitch. All hung over the pedestal with thrilling interest and curiosity. The lady in mourning retired a few steps, and folding her arms, motioned to the count to do as she had directed him.

The count took from the urn a small sheet of parchment, and read aloud the certificate of the marriage between the Count and Countess de Fronsard.

“This is indeed a genuine document, precious still to my heart, but alas! of little value now. The dear object has long been in the grave, too happy in throwing off the yoke of one who was all unworthy of her. Dear injured Clementina!” and he pressed the certificate to his lips, “we were happy once!”

In an instant the lady put aside her veil, and throwing herself into the arms of the count, “Clementina is not dead,—she lives!”

The count passed at once into the most extravagant raptures. He pressed her to his heart, he gazed with intense affection upon her features, and would have spoken, but words were for a time denied him; he hid his face on her bosom. It was a scene of indescribable fondness. The affection of their early days seemed to have returned in all its strength; it was as if each had drawn from the other the first confession of love. They were both unconscious of the presence of any other persons; they had sight and hearing only for each other.

Whilst the feelings of the count and countess were thus exquisite, those of the rest of the company were of a very different description. Their hopes had not only received their death-blow, but they had become themselves objects of censure and derision. They could have no doubt of the identity of the countess; they had indeed been acquainted with her before her supposed decease. Glad would they have been to have made their escape in silence, but they had another humiliation to undergo in the dignified rebuke of the countess, who, after the first moments devoted to the fondness of a wife, turned towards them with a commanding mien and tone.

“In early life we were united in marriage, and never did marriage promise greater happiness. And what and who interrupted and finally destroyed it? My husband was gay and fond of admiration—he was formed to excite

it, and he delighted in being the object of it ; and he found objects who were willing to give him their affections, and to withdraw his from me. They aspired to become wives, and yet they did not shrink from giving torture to the feelings of a wife ! They did not refuse to give credit to his vows, though they knew he had already pledged them to another. In the vanity of their hearts they flattered themselves that he who had been false to another, would still be faithful to them. They gave him their affections, and they believed they had secured his when they received his promise of marriage. Do you not shudder at such conduct ? The promise could only have been so much waste paper until the living wife was dead ; and as all were so anxious to replace her, all must have desired her death. Reflect upon the cruelty of such a wish. The tomb of the deceased wife is to be converted into an altar, for the celebration of the marriage of her successor ; and the blessing of God is implored for a union founded upon the violation of His most sacred injunctions.

“ Who are the actors in this unnatural drama ? Who could thus undermine the ruin of another’s peace ? May their crimes be pardoned as I pardon them, but may the recollection of them turn their hearts !

“ I saw my husband’s affection decrease daily. I tried—oh, with what anxiety ! to regain it—but in vain. Yet I did not torment him with reproaches—I did not remonstrate in bitterness and anger. When all hope was at an

end, I retired to solitude with a breaking heart. In an alarming illness, which had nearly proved fatal, I formed the resolution of quitting him, and of making him believe that I had fallen a victim, and had selected a place of interment which should remain a secret from every one. One person only was acquainted with my intentions—he had been long in our family, and was worthy of my confidence. I was anxious to ascertain the effect which my supposed death would produce upon my husband. I had not been kept in ignorance of the promises of marriage he had made to others; for there are always some kind friends who are eager to be the bearers of evil tidings. Perhaps I had a malicious pleasure in knowing how effectually I could defeat the hopes of those who relied upon the promises of my husband. Carefully and faithfully informed of every occurrence of my husband's life, I confess I had faint hopes indeed of resuming the place I once held in his affections. Still I felt that he would not be able to evade his promises, and that at last he would be forced to yield. Certainly the notable expedient of a lottery never entered into my thoughts.

“Having received the intelligence that the ladies were pressing, and their brothers menacing, I removed from the place of my retreat, and took up my residence near this hotel. The previous interview, first of the ladies with the count, and afterwards of their brothers, with the subsequent offer and the lottery device, were duly

communicated to me ; and with little beyond feelings of anger against all parties, I took possession of the armoury, from whence I could command immediate admittance to the stage in which so curious a drama was to be exhibited. I expected no other result than the gratification of my revenge, by breaking off the intended nuptials, resolving afterwards to return to my abode of solitude and sorrow.

“ But the actions and the expressions of my husband, since I threw off my disguise, have revived the hope that his affection is not dead, but has only slept, and that the unabated love of a wife may yet restore me to a portion, if not to all of my former happiness.”

The count confirmed this hope by a tender embrace, and by words of the most affectionate import. He then addressed the ladies, and confessing his errors and taking the whole blame upon himself, hoped they would extend their forgiveness, and afford him the most effectual proof of it, by honouring the countess and himself with their presence to celebrate a re-union, which might be called a second marriage.

Whether the ladies thought that, as they could no longer cherish the slightest hope, it would be useless to retain any feeling of impotent anger, I will not pretend to say. But after some consultation with their brothers, the invitation was accepted, and those who were present have assured me that it was difficult, during the ball which crowned the rejoicings of the day, to determine

who were the most joyous, the bride in possession, or the brides in expectation.

My narrative, however, would not be concluded *selon les règles*, if I were to omit that the six expectants were not long without getting husbands; and, by a curious fatality, each found one in the companion with whom she had been closeted at the count's.

LEAF THE FIFTH.

CARL LIEBEN.



CARL LIEBEN was a very useful personage in our village,—a kind of jack-of-all-trades. But before I enter upon his history, let me describe his person, or, rather, his face. Imagine a visage which, instead of being an oval from the forehead to the chin, described an oval from ear to ear. One eye was wholly deprived of a brow; but over the other was hair enough for both. Nor was this all. One eye was turned upward, as if to look after his hat; the other was cast downward, as if to take care of his shoe. The nose had a twist which had wrung it out of its natural position, and given it a direction towards the left ear. The mouth was a curve, much resembling Cupid's bow, only that one end of it nearly reached to the left side of his nose, whilst the other was turned down towards his chin.

Such was the unfortunate physiognomy of Carl Lieben. It would have puzzled all the Lavaters and Spurzheims in the world.

“Everything is good or bad by comparison,” said Carl Lieben to me one day. “It may not be good *per se*, but it is relatively so, when contrasted with some other thing. We

are too apt to weigh our means and situations against those who are superior to us in rank and riches. This is acting and thinking like fools. Compare them with those of others in the same sphere with ourselves, or in a lower sphere. That is the only wise way. It is strange that this advice is seldom or ever taken ; and that from the period of Horace's *Quā fit Mæcenas* down to the present time,—aye, long even before Horace lived, and probably as long as the world shall last, no man has been or ever will be contented with his lot. "Your life," he added, "has been chequered ; but you may have enjoyed some blissful hours, have seen some bright days. It has been of a mingled yarn. But listen to me.

"I never can revert to the scenes I have witnessed, without feeling a disposition to laugh. Whether it be that some sorrows are so much out of the common course of human events as to be almost ridiculous, I will not decide. God knows I have had as large a share of afflictions as most men ; but I have always endeavoured to discipline my mind to the patient endurance of them, and to the belief that all these chances and changes were natural, and could not have been otherwise."

Carl Lieben was an optimist in the very best sense of the word. Undoubtedly this patient, contented, disposition was mainly to be attributed to the conviction that his conscience was void of offence towards God and man. He could bear adversity with fortitude, and best so when he had

not deserved it ; and, humble as might be his pillow, it was without one thorn from remorse.

“ In early life I was a chorister in the cathedral of Manheim. My voice was good, and I was as diligent in my attendance upon the master of the choristers as any of his other pupils. I had arrived at the age when I was to take my proper station in the choir. No sooner, however, had I opened my mouth, than I observed a general attempt to stifle a laugh. I proceeded, nevertheless, but every one of the choristers was so struck by the uncouthness of my physiognomy, that all gravity forsook them, and there was a general laugh. I tried to remedy this defect, but the more I tried, the less I succeeded, and the laugh became louder and longer. I was forthwith discharged, for it would have been unseemly to have profaned the church with such scandalous merriment. The master, compassionating my situation, recommended me to his sovereign to form one of his private band. His highness had evening concerts, and by some strange accident I was selected to sing a solo. It was a piece of sacred music. The first line of the hymn or air (I have good reason to remember it) was, ‘ Why dost thou mock us with strange sights ? ’ Placed in the front of the orchestra, I had scarcely finished the line when every face before me seemed convulsed. Some stuffed their handkerchiefs into their mouths ; others pinched their lips. The sovereign hurried out of his box ; his consort hid her face behind her fan. I attempted to stem the tide. I went on till an

unlucky wag repeated the first line, 'Why dost thou mock us with strange sights?' Then was the finale to all gravity, as well as to my singing. Nothing could be heard but laughter, and the court and the concert broke up amidst the loudest peals.

"I could have cried for very shame and vexation, but *cui bono?* so I slunk home to the only friend I had in the world, my poor mother, and hurried to bed, that she might not discover my distress.

"The sovereign sent for me next day. He had inquired into my story, and found that I was neither dissolute nor idle, and he spoke kindly to me. He told me that his consort had laughed so long that she was afraid of a miscarriage. 'Ugly enough to frighten a horse,' you have often heard, but ugly enough to make a woman miscarry, was a distinction reserved for poor Carl Lieben. Well, my good friend, I was immediately deprived of my place, which was conferred upon a man of happier physiognomy. Thank heaven it was no fault of mine, so I bethought me what was to be the next change in the drama of my life.

"His highness, after giving me a gratuity, ordered me to be received into the band of his own body guards. I was a good performer upon the clarionet. We had a grand parade, and were all in circle round the master of the band. I played my best; but you see the unfortunate twist of my mouth. The mouth of the clarionet, from being placed in the upper angle of it, raised the lower part of the instru-

ment so high that it rested on the top of my head. The master gave me a stern look, and ordered me to place it straight. 'Impossible,' I said, 'for my mouth is crooked.' This speech and my appearance so disconcerted every one of the band that not a man could blow a note. The trumpet gave a grunt and was silent, for the trumpeter could not proceed for laughing. The bugle uttered one scream, and then was silent from the same cause. Even the black drummer let fall his sticks, and had nearly tumbled from his horse, so loud and vehement were his cachinnations.

"The commanding officer rode up to enquire the cause of this strange interruption. The master of the band could not speak, but pointed at me. I was, of course, dismissed as summarily as I had been discharged from the concert and the choir. I began to think in what way I could disguise this deformity, so as to be no longer the scorn and laughing-stock of society. The deliberation was long and difficult. At length I flattered myself that if I had a wig made to suit the contour of my face, I might make my ugliness less formidable. A wig was accordingly made to correspond, as far as possible, with my awkward visage. But when I put it on, the curls of one side of the wig took possession of the top of my head, whilst the curls of the other side sought a quiet asylum on my shoulder; and I had had my head shaved to give all due advantage and encouragement to the peruke. This was the worst of all.

If I appeared in my wig, the boys hallooed after me, and asked, why I did not put it straight on my block. If I showed myself without it, they wondered what I had done with the thatch of my scull. I could have taken on strangely, but I would not make my poor mother uneasy, who, God bless her ! thought me a Cupid in beauty, and an Apollo in music. So I bore up as well as I could, and consulted the master of the household, who had sometimes been kind to me. He advised me by no means to remain in the city, where my life would be a constant scene of uneasiness, but to repair to one of the royal hunting seats, and take upon myself the office of game-keeper. I was thankful, and resolved to set off with my mother without delay. ' You may be ugly enough to shock human beings, but I don't suppose the beasts of the field will take fright at you.' There was some consolation in this speech, blunt and homely as it was ; but, unluckily, my physiognomy was as hostile to me in my shooting, as it had been in my singing capacity. The unfortunate obliquity of my right eye was such, that after I had shouldered my piece and attempted to take aim by looking along the barrel, I found that if I wanted to hit any bird or animal in front, the shot invariably took a lateral direction. When I aimed at any object on the ground, the discharge had an upward range ; and *vice versa*, when I hoped to display my talent in shooting flying, I lodged the charge in the stump of a tree or a gate-post.

“Thus it happened that I never brought down either bird or beast, and the only solitary instance of success that attended me was in hitting my own dog, who had just sprung a covey.

“‘Abhorred of men and beasts!’ I exclaimed in the bitterness of my anguish, ‘where shalt thou seek for refuge now?’ These were moments of agony, less on my own account than on my poor mother’s. But there was a necessity for rallying my spirits; and I comforted myself with an old saying, ‘That as the wheel of fortune goes round, those who are at the bottom must reach the top, whilst those who are at the top must descend to the bottom.’ But the saying is not infallible. It keeps many always at the bottom.

“My face having so far been my greatest enemy, and my eyes, nose, and mouth having played me such slippery tricks, I reflected that I might find my hands more serviceable. Perhaps they would not treat me so scurvily. Though I could not make myself ornamental, I might render myself useful. We returned to the capital, and there I became acquainted with a barber-surgeon, which professions are often combined in German towns; the bleeder and the brewer of medicines not disdaining to flourish his curling-irons upon the head, and handle his razor upon the beard of his customers. The barber-surgeon was getting old, but his mind and memory still served him. His hand, however, began to tremble; he

could not handle the razor steadily, nor could he be more securely trusted with the lancet, for fear of his puncturing an artery instead of breathing a vein. He was under the necessity, therefore, of imparting his skill in both professions to another, and I was the fortunate object of his choice.

“ Still, I ought not to disguise from you that he had at first sundry qualms and misgivings. He was afraid of the effect of my physiognomy upon his patients, which, he thought, might shock the nervous system, and thus counteract the efficacy of his medicines. I know not how far these fears might have operated had I not reminded him that men were more disposed to laugh at the sight of me than to be shocked, and that laughter had always been held to be of singular benefit, by sending the blood more cheerily through the veins, and disposing the mind to more agreeable sensations.

“ Behold me now the pupil and assistant of the barber-surgeon. I paid assiduous court to him, and was so diligent that in a short time I was able to compound medicines, and to practise upon the beards of the weekly customers, who were not entitled to that delicacy of treatment which the more frequent suitors received ; that is, they were not favoured with the application of the keenest razors. My instruments being none of the best, and resembling a billhook in sharpness as well as in size, you may easily conceive that being placed under my hands was no joke.

By some obliquity of vision, I very often dug the point of the razor into the nose of the patient, or, if he opened his mouth too wide, made a desperate incision in his tongue. I have had many a man dart away half shaved, swearing that he did not choose to run the risk of leaving his lips or his nose behind him; others would conjure me to spare some tender pimple or excrescence, which I totally forgot until reminded by the anguish and anger of the sufferers.

“Deeds like these were not likely to make me very popular amongst my patients. One would vent himself in execrations against my odd eyes; others swore at my wry nose; a third set enquired where I had got such a queer mouth; and a fourth would advise me to hire myself to the gardeners during the fruit season, for the birds would never come near such a scarecrow.

“Meantime I did not neglect the more noble and useful part of my profession. I became acquainted with the virtues and properties of plants. I had a smattering—and but a smattering—of anatomy, for my master had no more himself; but at length I arrived at the dignity of breathing a vein.

“I know not to what eminence I might have risen had my talents been suffered to have had fair play. But I was never to have more than a glimpse of prosperity and sunshine.

“One evening, during the absence of my master, the valet of a nobleman came in great haste, and as I was the only person at home, insisted on my immediate attend-

ance, his young mistress having been taken extremely ill. I went accordingly, well pleased that I had such an opportunity of distinguishing myself. I was ushered into the presence of the father and mother, who were in their daughter's bed chamber. The young lady was in great pain, but she seemed anxious to conceal it. She was so wrapped up in shawls that I could not form any opinion as to her form. I made some enquiries, and received for answer that she was often afflicted with pains which gave her the appearance of a person grown suddenly fat, but that they subsided upon being left to herself. Her manner was altogether strange and confused. I took my leave for the purpose of sending her some composing medicine. The parents followed me into the ante-chamber, and asked me my opinion, which I gave openly and conscientiously, as I felt myself bound to do. They told me that the young lady had frequently complained of such pains, to which I replied that they were natural for a female in her situation, being with child and near her delivery. Never did I witness more astonishment in the faces of human beings. 'With child!—our good and virtuous daughter! Out upon thee, vile calumniator, out this moment!' You may be sure I made no delay in obeying such peremptory commands, and, hastening home, communicated the message and my own opinion. The old barber-surgeon inveighed against my candour, which he called impertinence, and hurried off in evident alarm.

“What happened during his interview with the parties I know not, but the effect was fatal to me. Upon his return he declared that my folly would be the ruin of him, and that, as the *sine qua non* of his retaining the custom of the noble family, I was to be discharged forthwith. I remonstrated, I reasoned with him; I dwelt upon the injustice of disgracing a man for giving his honest opinion. But the old barber-surgeon was deaf to all remonstrances, and opening the door bade me never let him see such a lump of deformity again. By the way, I should add that the event confirmed the correctness of my opinion, for the young lady was safely delivered the next day, my old master being the accoucheur. However, that did not mitigate the severity of my sentence. I left the barber-surgeon’s service as poor as I entered it, but with some addition to my stock of knowledge.

“All ideas of settling in town after such an event were out of the question, and I was deliberating within myself what new path I could discover, when I met our landlord, whom I had attended when he was in town before during an illness brought on chiefly by mental uneasiness. After disclosing my forlorn situation, he said he would consider what was to be done, and desired me to meet him in the same place at the same hour to-morrow. I did so, and he said that I might earn a livelihood by removing to the heath. It was true that it was neither populous nor rich, but there was no barber-surgeon within many miles, and

diseases had sometimes proved fatal from the difficulty of procuring medical aid immediately. I gladly acceded to his proposal, and lost no time in repairing hither with my mother. The landlord assisted me in the outset in various ways. He enabled me to buy the necessary instruments, and to lay in a small stock of drugs. The herbs I procured and distilled myself.

“I was now the barber-surgeon of the heath, and here I have lived for the last ten years. But rugged enough was my path at first. I pass over, as things not worth remarking, the mockery and insult I was in the habit of receiving from idle boys and mischievous men. They are the never-failing attendants of the deformed in body or the idiot in mind.

“As if it were to spite me, there were fewer people sick for two years than had ever been known, so that drugs and distilled waters remained idle upon my shelves unless I chose to take them myself. My lancet rusted in its case, and once only in the week was I called upon to exercise my trade of *tonsur*. Had you seen the beards which I was then doomed to mow you would have owned that it was no child’s play. They would have done credit to the hide of a bear.

“But the profits of this part of my professional practice were so small as scarcely to enable my mother and myself to keep soul and body together. However we had a roof over our heads, and a certain amount of repose which we had not

been suffered to enjoy before. So we went on without repining, and I cast about me to see if there was anything else to which my hands could be applied to better our condition. There were two of the villagers who were more humane than the rest, and who, being fond of music, took lessons from me during the long winter evenings. One was a basket-maker, the other a carpenter. I said to them one night, with an air of jocularity, but with a serious intention, that it was fair they should teach me their trades in return for my instructing them in mine. Accordingly I took lessons from the basket-maker one evening and the carpenter another, and by degrees became a tolerable artist in both trades. I found a sale for my baskets amongst the neighbouring farmers, and was able to earn something occasionally as a jobbing carpenter. I made out also my landlord's bills, and I verily believe should have arrived at the dignity of clerk to the curé had he not been fearful of the effect of my physiognomy upon his parishioners. However, as some indemnity, I was honoured with the post of clarionet player, which I could fill behind a curtain in the gallery of the church, where I could be heard but not seen.

"I was thus barber-surgeon, clerk, carpenter, basket-maker, and clarionet-player. You see how many strings I had to my bow. I had occupation enough on my hands now; not that my different employments did not frequently confuse me, and involve me in some ridiculous situations. For instance, in the hurry of a sudden summons, I have

sometimes taken with me the wrong article. When I have been sent for to bleed a patient I have snatched up my saw instead of pocketing my lancet. When I have been wanted to repair a chair or a table I have taken from my pocket my instruments for drawing teeth. I have carried a basket to a female who stood in need of my assistance as an accoucheur; and once forgot myself so far as to pocket a hammer instead of my clarionet, nor ever discovered my mistake until I was on the point of applying the end of the hammer to my mouth. But these are trifles. *Ha-nugæ!* fortunately I had not to add *seria ducunt in mala*.

“My old mother lived long enough to see me arrive at all these honours, and I verily believe that, in the closing days of her life, she had the sin of pride to answer for;—but it was pride in her son. Often have I stolen a look at her from behind my curtain after I have played some anthem or psalm. She would at such moments cast her eyes round her as if to receive homage for being the mother of such a son. She sleeps the sleep of death in yonder little grave, over which I have placed a wooden cross with an inscription. But he to whom only she was known in this world wants no memento to remind him of the manner in which she performed her duties as a mother.—Let me hope that I did not neglect mine as a son!

“I may now confidently hope that if the world can dispense with the lancet of the surgeon, defy the razor

of the barber, and even hold psalm-playing in as little respect as the Quakers, it will not be able to go on without having recourse to the ingenuity of the basket-maker or the labours of the carpenter.”

LEAF THE SIXTH.

LETTERS FROM THE GRAVE.



FATHER ANSELM, who had accompanied me in my last visit to the capital, and whose whole life was occupied in deeds of benevolence and charity, who was really one of those rare beings who had rather go to the house of mourning than to the house of joy, had been invited to give the last consolations of religion to a gentleman who had died under extraordinary circumstances, and with a singular impression upon his mind which nothing could eradicate ; but which, as it had nothing criminal in it, the good father was more inclined to pity than to censure.

The Baron de Carlstadt had been married to a lady whom he loved with the utmost fondness, and who returned his love with equal ardour. Their union had been preceded by strange and interesting events.

The baron had been destined for the church, and upon the death of his father, was placed under the care of his uncle, the prior of a monastery of Black Canons.

The baron, at that early period of life, had formed no decided opinion as to his future career. He had no preference for a monastic life, and he entered the convent chiefly because it was the wish of his uncle. He pursued his studies and conformed to the rules of the monastery more from habit than inclination. He felt the dulness and monotony of such a life, but had not thought of seeking any more active and stirring employment. Amongst the monks, there was one who had studied his character with attention, and had discovered in it symptoms of repugnance and discontent. Such a man, it might be supposed, would have been anxious to remove those symptoms, and to reconcile him to monastic vows by painting to him the treachery of mankind, and the sure disappointment of every hope of happiness founded upon worldly pursuits. But the monk acted otherwise. He had mixed largely with the world, and had experienced great vicissitude of fortune. He had been alternately rich and poor; fawned upon by the great, and then neglected; he had made his prosperity the means of enriching his friends, and in his adversity he had found those very friends the loudest in their censure, and the most resolute in their refusal of assistance. One of them had added the crime of seducing the wife of his benefactor, and having been forced into the field, had paid the penalty of his baseness with his life. Stung to the quick by this last misery, he determined to retire from

the world ; and taking the vows, and undergoing the necessary probation, was admitted into the monastery of Black Canons.

But he mistook a temporary disgust with the world for a rooted hatred, and he found, when it was too late, that he had an utter distaste to all the duties which he was called upon to discharge. With these feelings he determined, though he could not retrace his own steps, to prevent any other from selecting a profession, which, in his opinion, was offensive in the eye of heaven, and criminal in that of man.

Whether he argued wisely, I, who am a Protestant, will not decide : but at least he argued sincerely. He lost no time in giving the young baron the greatest dislike and horror of the monastic profession. It was not too late for the baron to choose some other career, for he had not taken any vows, and had only begun, under the superintendence of his uncle, a course of theological study.

The lessons of the prior were soon forgotten in the lectures of the monk, and the study of the fathers was soon abandoned for the more seductive history of the affairs of nations, the exploits of heroes, and the deeds which confer fame and immortality. What youthful mind could fail to be moved by such stirring scenes, or what youthful heart could refuse to glow when feats of arms were recounted, and love bestowed the prize which had been won by valour ?

The prior was not slow in discovering the altered mien and taste of his nephew, and he grieved that the church would be deprived of such a pillar. But the prior could not conquer his repugnance; and bidding adieu to the monk, who rejoiced in the success of his efforts, and taking an affectionate leave of his uncle, who concluded his parting exhortation with these remarkable words, "May you have a warning from the grave," the baron took the road that led to his estates, and established his residence in the castle of his ancestors. But idleness is incompatible with youth, and war was raging between the Turks and Imperialists. He had no difficulty in procuring a commission in the Austrian service, and fleshed his maiden sword at the siege of Belgrade. You remember the length and obstinacy of the siege and defence of that fortress, and the loss of life consequent upon the storming. The baron distinguished himself highly, and soon proved that he was fitter for the camp than the cloister. In the licence given to soldiers when a place has been taken by storm, we are often the reluctant witnesses of scenes which true courage condemns, and humanity recoils from. A party of soldiers had entered a Turkish pavilion near the principal mosque, and were in the act of dragging out a venerable man, with the intention of putting him to death unless he discovered his treasures, when the baron, attracted by the old man's entreaties for mercy, spurred his charger

into the garden of the pavilion, and seeing the imminent danger of the unhappy victim, struck to the earth the soldier who was on the point of butchering him with his sabre. He commanded the whole party to fall back immediately, and as his uniform proclaimed his rank, they paid that obedience to discipline which they had refused to humanity, and fell into line immediately.

The unhappy man thus saved from pillage, and probably from death, prostrated himself at the feet of his deliverer, and poured out his thanks in terms of the deepest gratitude. The baron checked him as soon as possible, and desiring him to take that repose which his recent sufferings had rendered necessary, promised to visit him the next day.

On the morning after the baron found him busily employed in arranging papers, and in depositing his treasures in money and jewels in a recess in the wall, which was so contrived as to render discovery next to impossible. The baron, from a feeling of delicacy, would have retired, but Sidi Achmet, the name of the Turk, would not permit him. "I can have no concealments from my deliverer, and it was in expectation of his visit that I am thus employing myself. I was once high in favour with the Sultan, who appointed me to a pachalic. Life has nothing more uncertain in it than the favour of Sultans. The elevation of a favourite is the signal for envy and intrigue. Absent at ~~his~~ post, he has not the power of coun-

teracting their designs, or of exposing their machinations. The Sultan's ear is easily abused by malicious charges, and his cupidity excited by the purses which confiscation brings into his treasury. It would have been strange if I had escaped a fate so common to my predecessors. I was charged with the crime of wishing to erect my pachalic into an independent state, and the charge received immediate credit. I had had however, a friendly warning from an old companion in arms, the Capitan Pacha, and had sufficient time to take the necessary precautions. Whether it was through the good offices of the Capitan Pacha, I know not, but the firman which brought me the order to give up my government, was not accompanied by the bowstring. I was commanded to retire to Belgrade. All the property which the officers could find in the house was confiscated to the Sultan's treasury. I did not delay a moment in abandoning the territory which had been entrusted to me, but set off with a light heart for Belgrade, glad at having a burthen removed from my shoulders, a burthen which must at length have crushed me.

" You have heard, no doubt, of the harems and seraglios of Turkish pachas, and expect to find me travelling with a numerous suite of females and their attendant officers; but I had neither harem nor seraglio, and my retinue consisted only of two females and their servants, with three domestics who had been for many years at-

tached to my person. These two females were my wife and daughter.

“During my residence in Greece, many years since, I had rendered some service to a Christian merchant, who reposed such confidence in me as to appoint me the guardian of his only child. It was a delicate and important trust, and I fulfilled it in a way that, had he been living, would have met, I doubt not, with his hearty approval. Zulima, my ward, was some ten years younger than myself. She was as beautiful as imagination can conceive the loveliest of our Houris to be; and there was an innate grace and gentleness of manner, in all she said and did, that at once prepossessed all hearts in her favour. My own could not resist the general attraction; and the homage I paid, no less to her virtues than to her beauty, insensibly developed itself into an ardent and sincere attachment. She was not long (what woman is?) in discovering this fact, and my affection was returned in a way that left no doubt as to the reciprocity of our feelings. A proposal of marriage was made and accepted, the only condition imposed by the lady being that she should be allowed to retain her own religion, and that any daughters she might have should be trained in the same faith as her own. She had but one daughter, Zulima, and she is a Christian. Whether or not I compromised my character as a true Mussulman by such conduct I care not to decide, but I acted under the conviction that all God’s creatures, whether Mahometans

or Christians, are the objects of His benevolence and mercy.

“ Our life glided along in peace and happiness at Belgrade. Our home was a home of comfort, and Zulima grew up increasing in beauty as she increased in years. It was then that war disturbed our quiet and inobtrusive life, and forced upon me the alternative either of retiring from Belgrade, or of placing my wife and child in a situation where the horrors of war should not be able to reach them.

“ About five miles from Belgrade there is a large cemetery; on the confines of which stands a building of considerable size, surrounded by palms and cypresses. It has the appearance of a mausoleum belonging to some powerful family, and exhibits on its entablature the following inscription:—‘The tomb of Solyman Mustapha.’ He was one of my ancestors. I knew that the mausoleum contained various apartments, any one of which might easily, in cases of emergency, be converted into a place of concealment. A subterranean passage led to the banks of a river, which offered the opportunity, in case of need, of escape to a territory beyond the limits of the Belgradian government.

“ The certainty of immediate war, and the belief that Belgrade would be the first object of attack, quickened my preparations; and, all necessaries having been conveyed to the mausoleum, Zulima and her mother, their female servants, with two of my most faithful followers, took possession of it. It was but a few days before the

banners of the Austrians were descried from the battlements of Belgrade.

" My occupation, as I have already mentioned, detained me in Belgrade ; but, however dejected I might feel at the absence of those who constituted the great happiness of my life, I had no fear for their safety. The Austrians approached ; and, having began their first parallel, all communication between the fortress and the surrounding country was rendered impracticable. The particulars of the siege and the surrender of the place are so well known to you, who had so large a share in the operations, that I will not dwell upon them. As a member of the council, I had hoped to escape the pillage and the outrages in which victorious soldiers indulge ; but neither my office nor my age afforded me any protection, and I should have fallen a sacrifice to their brutal violence, had it not been for your humane interference. I feel however, though my life was spared, that it has only been spared for a few brief hours. A blow I received from the musket of one of your soldiers has produced some internal injury, which, I am satisfied, must speedily prove fatal. I cannot explain to you why I feel this conviction ; forebodings come unbidden, but not always in vain. I can foresee their accomplishment in my own case, and have been making preparations accordingly. These papers contain directions relative to Zulima and her mother, and also to the place of their concealment, and to the disposition

of my property. In that cabinet (handing me the key) are jewels and bonds to a large amount. To your charge I entrust them, as well as the guardianship of my wife and child; feeling well assured that the man who could save my life is not likely to abuse my confidence." The baron bowed in acknowledgment of the Turk's gratitude, and also in token of his acceptance of the trust.

"It is enough," continued Sidi Achmet, "the knowledge that my wife and daughter will find a protector in you removes half the anguish I feel in parting from them. Farewell!" The baron retired, visibly affected both by the situation and the magnanimity of the Turk, and also deeply impressed with the responsibility which Sidi Achmet's noble reliance on his honour had thrust upon him.

A few hours proved the truth of the Turk's presentiment. It appeared that some vessel had been injured, which occasioned internal hemorrhage, and caused his death.

The termination of the siege, and some negotiations which were afterwards entered into between the belligerents, afforded the baron sufficient opportunity to discharge the trust which had been confided to him. The papers enabled him to find out the mausoleum, and furnished him with the necessary signs and words for obtaining admission. It may well be supposed that the appearance of a young Austrian officer in their place of concealment created in the minds of Zulima and her mother a feeling both of astonishment and alarm. Their

first impression was that Sidi Achmet's papers had been seized, and had afforded a clue to their concealment, and that the officer had in consequence been despatched by his government with some secret instructions respecting the disposal of their persons. These fears however were soon dispelled. The papers, which the baron now delivered to Zulima's mother, and which were examined and read by her with mingled pain and interest, sufficiently explained the reasons of his being there. Had any doubt now remained of the baron's intentions, his open and candid manner would have reassured them both ; and the arrangements which he proposed, with equal promptitude and judgment, were a sufficient guarantee of the reality of his mission, and of the wisdom which had guided Sidi Achmet in selecting him as the guardian of his wife and child. The jewels and bonds he converted into bills of exchange upon Vienna and other cities ; and, obtaining leave of absence upon the pretext of family affairs, he escorted the mother and daughter to his château, where he left them, and returned to join his regiment.

But this time he quitted his château with very different feelings. The intimacy which his trust necessarily established between his wards and himself begat insensibly a feeling of deep regard for the one, and of tender affection for the other ; and, before he set out for the army, he had the happiness to hear from the confessing lips of the daughter that his affection was returned, and that the

declaration of his attachment was neither unexpected nor unappreciated. During the baron's absence, all kinds of apprehensions tortured the imagination of the anxious girl. At one time she saw him covered with wounds, and looking piteously for some kind hand to assist him ; at another he appeared as a miserable captive, with fetters on his limbs ; whilst again, and worse than all, she saw him stretched upon the battle-field, with the livid hue of death upon his countenance. But, happily, none of these phantasms were realized. He returned in safety and with glory, and Zulima became Baroness de Carlstadt.

The promises of happiness which such a union held out were amply fulfilled. Never were two persons more united in heart and soul ; they cultivated the same tastes, followed the same pursuits, and manifested the same desire to make themselves respected and beloved.

The first interruption to this scene of happiness arose from the death of Zulima's mother. A grievous loss it was both to her daughter and son-in-law : and if it be permitted to those who quit this world to bear into the next tidings of those they had left behind them, she could convey to Sidi Achmet the delightful assurance of having left their only child happy and beloved.

There are persons who believe that one sorrow must be the harbinger of another, and who, impressed with that belief, act sometimes in such a manner as to accelerate, if not to produce it. Such conduct could not

be imputed to the baroness; but from the time of her mother's death she had indulged strong apprehensions for which there did not appear to be the slightest ground. Still they had taken such complete hold of her, that neither the remonstrances of her husband nor her own good sense were able to remove or even to diminish them.

Two children were the issue of their marriage. Never were children healthier, or possessed of more life and spirit. Who could have predicted aught but lengthened existence to two such beings? Who, in the roses that gave such animation to their cheeks, could have expected to find the seeds of fatal disease and early death? Yet Zulima could not shake off this sad presentiment, and she never looked steadfastly at her children without an involuntary shudder and a sigh.

They had now reached their tenth and eleventh years, and as yet disease had never visited them. From this the ceaseless care and watchful superintendence of their mother was unsparingly bestowed to protect them. The long catalogue of disorders incidental to infancy was daily—indeed, almost hourly—run through in the anxious mind of the doating mother; and there was no precaution, even to the extent of limiting the boundary and direction of their daily walks, that she did not adopt in order to protect her dear children from the possibility of contracting disease by infection. But how vain are all human devices and human

calculations ! An accident, trifling in itself, destroyed in a moment the efforts of years, and defeated almost the only aim of Zulima's existence. The children were caught in a thunder-storm at the extremity of the park, and ran for shelter into a cottage, in which a woman, with a child in her arms, had but just taken refuge. That child had the small-pox, and of the most malignant character.

The children returned to the château after the storm had subsided, and eagerly told their mother what they had seen. The mother was from that moment convinced that her long-cherished forebodings would be speedily and fatally confirmed. The children sickened, and the disorder proved to be of the most aggravated kind. Strong as their constitutions were by nature, carefully as they had been reared, and diligently as they were attended by the ablest physicians, the malady was of too deadly a nature to be resisted. They both died within a few days of each other.

After a long endurance of grief, which the loss of both her children had made almost insupportable, Zulima returned to society. But her mind seemed entirely changed, and she was like a reed shaken by the wind. Her husband engrossed all her fondness and all her fears. She felt that her life was drawing to a close, and that she was fast hastening to the tomb which enclosed her innocent and lamented children. She contemplated with the deepest anguish the situation of her beloved husband, when she should

no longer be able to anticipate his wishes and minister to his wants. She was sure that no other would ever love him as she did, and for the first time a pang of jealousy shot through her heart as she contemplated the possibility of another bearing her name and occupying her place.

The baron beheld this fresh grief of his wife with deep despondency. He did everything to divert her mind from brooding over such gloomy ideas: he never left her, he tried all means to soothe her, he impressed upon her that the visitations which had afflicted them came from God, who, for wise though inscrutable ends, chose to try the faith and fortitude of His creatures. But all was unavailing, and his efforts to comfort and console her proved ineffectual.

It cannot be supposed that grief acting upon so feeble a frame could be long sustained. It undermined her constitution, and the seeds of consumption had already been sown. In the young and the happy its progress is often slow; but with her it was rapid, and quickly developed.

For some days before she breathed her last, she was in close conference with a domestic who had been her foster-sister. With her she arranged the affairs of her household, leaving such and such directions to be followed after her death. The parting with the baron, as it was the last, so it was the hardest duty she had to perform. Their union had been a happy one: none of those

storms which shake the peace of married life had ever vexed them. Her children, who might have comforted the father in the absence of their mother, had been taken from them, and now she was to be removed herself, and to leave him a lone and solitary being. This was insupportable agony. She tried to speak comfort to him but she could not, nor could his grief be softened; it was deep and exquisite, and convulsed every fibre of his frame. They only who have passed a life of blissful love together (alas! that they should be so few!) can conceive the pangs, the anguish of such a scene! It seems as if human nature must sink under it, as if the over-burthened heart must break at once. At last the death-blow came, and more suddenly than could have been expected. The countess had uttered a few words, amongst which were these remarkable ones,—“You will have warnings from the grave,”—when, in an attempt to raise herself, with a view of placing her hand on the extended arm of her husband, her head fell helplessly on her bosom, and she never moved again.

I draw a veil over the scene that followed. The baroness was buried by the side of her children, and some few weeks after the funeral, her husband found upon a little altar, before which they had been in the habit of saying their prayers together, a letter addressed to him. “God of heaven!” he exclaimed. “It is her handwriting, and she is dead. It is a letter from the grave!” The last

words of his uncle—the last words of his wife—had been nearly the same: both had talked of *warnings from the grave*. “And this is one!” He tore it open with a mixed feeling of awe and surprise, and read as follows:—

“The wife is no longer visible to her afflicted husband, but is permitted to hover near him—to know every action of his life—every thought of his heart. She watches over him by night as well as by day. Not a sigh nor a prayer from him is unheeded or unheard. Oh! my beloved husband; how deep and terrible was the anguish of that dreadful night, when, having placed me by the side of the cold and lifeless forms of our dear children, you returned to that chamber, which was once the scene of our mutual happiness! What convulsions then shook your exhausted frame! What scalding tears rushed down your cheeks! What bursts of tenderness and grief were there poured forth, that testified to the depth of your affection, and recalled to your wounded spirit all those endearing appellations which we were wont to bestow so lovingly and lavishly on each other. Let me be still, as I was then, the sole object of your thoughts! I am ever near you in spirit; and we shall meet again!

“ZULIMA.”

Besides the expressions which might have been expected from the tenderness of a wife, there were proofs

which could not be mistaken : she had accurately described the scene which followed her funeral—the handwriting could not be mistaken ; it was hers, and could not be imitated.

The baron was not a superstitious man, but it might be amongst the ways of Providence to suffer even the dead to speak from the grave and communicate with the living. He became convinced that the baroness, for purposes which he could not penetrate, but possibly to save him from sin, was permitted to assume the office of monitor. At all events, to be thus spoken to from the tomb was matter for solemn contemplation.

Two months had elapsed since the receipt of the first letter, when, on the same spot, at the same hour of the night, he found a second. It was still from Zulima.

“ The first storm of grief has passed away. The tempest no longer bows down my beloved to the earth. Deep groans no longer disturb his rest. He is anxious no more to be shut out from the light of day, nor to indulge his sorrow in solitude and darkness. Heaven has mercifully ordained that grief shall not endure for ever, but find its termination in the gradual reaction of the mind, as well as in the healing balm and comforts of religion.

“ My beloved, our children are at rest and enjoying eternal happiness. But you have many and powerful calls upon you. You have a large domain, a numerous tenantry.

You have to watch over their interests here, and to warn them that there is an hereafter. You will not quit our château, for you will not remove from the sphere where your actions may be most beneficial. Be actively kind in deeds. Go often among the poor and the afflicted ; enter their cottages—acquaint yourself with their wants—encourage and reward their virtues. Rebuke them for evil, but rebuke them not too harshly. These are your public duties. Assemble around you wise and good men, who may banish gloom from your hearth. The dissolute and the gay will find no favour in your sight. You will live as if you were fitting yourself, by good actions here, for that blessed futurity which shall restore you, and for ever, to

“ZULIMA.”

If the baron felt less awe in the perusal of this second letter, it was to be attributed to the difference in its style and contents. It spoke the quiet language of advice—it had none of those bursts which wound the heart and give a sharper poignancy to grief. It entered calmly and mildly into his pursuits, and pointed out the path which best might lead him to present and to future peace. If it soothed his sorrow, it made him feel a more rooted affection, if that were possible, for a wife whose anxiety for his welfare was active even beyond the grave.

Months passed away, and no more warnings were received, and no more letters. But time, whilst it softens

sorrow, supplies no antidote for solitude. The baron was a man of an active and social mind; he had been a soldier, and had seen stirring scenes. Was it to be expected that such a man would be contented with his present mode of living? There were hours and days in which the sight and recollection of the places where he had been so happy, most painfully revived his grief, and rendered all his pursuits irksome and distasteful. He resolved to retire from his château, and seek for tranquillity in a distant possession. A purchaser was easily found—the lawyers were employed to complete the necessary instruments—a day more, and the castle and its domain were to pass for ever from his hands. On the night preceding, he proceeded, as usual, to his bed chamber, and a letter met his eyes in the same place where the previous ones had been deposited—the same handwriting—the same seal. He tore it open.

“Can I recognise my beloved in the deed he is about to do? Can I persuade myself that he has quite forgotten his Zulima and her children?—that he is wearied with the guardianship of their unconscious remains?—that their tomb is to be profaned by the presence of strangers, to whom it cannot ever be an object of either interest or affection? Zulima left to her beloved the charge of this sacred spot; and she trusted that its gates would no more be opened till death should call her beloved from this world, and place him by the side of his much-honoured

wife. And must this sweet and consoling hope be now abandoned? Will the husband fly from the grave of the wife who loved him? Oh no! no! he will not do this; he will never surrender the custody of that lifeless body to foreign keepers, and suffer its bones to mingle with those of aliens and of strangers!

“ZULIMA.”

So powerful an appeal changed in an instant the determination of the baron. He had altered his mind—he would not part with his property—and the lawyers and their client were dismissed forthwith. There was an abruptness in the manner in which he announced this change of purpose—a restlessness in his movements—a wildness in his look, which half convinced them that his mind was becoming deranged.

A long period of tranquillity succeeded. A year passed without any additional warning. Meanwhile he began to indulge the idea of transmitting his name and race to posterity. He had an illustrious ancestry—had more quarterings in his arms than I care to enumerate. Was it not natural that he should wish to continue his name? Of what advantage to the dead could it be, that he should be the last of his race?—“no son of mine succeeding.” The family had been the stay and support of the state; and history had recorded the heroic actions of his ancestors for five centuries. Why should not his descendants be equally renowned? The more he dwelt upon this idea,

the more was he convinced of its policy. It was soon known that the baron had determined upon a second marriage, and the object of his choice was said to be the daughter of a neighbouring nobleman.

The grave was not yet silent. Its warning voice was heard again, and the following letter spoke of the impression which the baron's intention had made upon Zulima.

“Adieu ! once and too well beloved ! Adieu ! and for ever ! Zulima, no longer thy Zulima, bids thee an eternal adieu ! No longer will she hover round thee ! No more shalt thou be the object of her solicitude and care ! Thoughts of future happiness ! Prospects of a reunion beyond the grave ! Hopes of eternal happiness ! all—all—have vanished. We shall never meet again ! Another is to take the place of thy once dear Zulima. She will repose upon the breast which was Zulima's.—Throne of bliss ! Another will soothe thy sorrows and minister to thy joys. Another ! Is it possible ? Another ! and Zulima is forgotten.

“Come, dear and innocent babes, come forth from the tomb ; we are no longer remembered. Fold yourselves in your mother's arms : she is your only true parent. Your bodies, with the grave that contains them, are about to be bartered for gold ; the very tomb itself will be levelled with the dust, and your ashes scattered to the winds. Your

father abandons us. Oh, unutterable anguish ! Receive the last, last farewell of

“ZULIMA.”

Conceive the effect of such a letter and at such a time. The proof it afforded of every thought of his heart being known, of every deed not only done but meditated, struck him with awe and dread. He shuddered as he looked around him. It seemed as if the dead could not only speak from the grave, but that they could invest themselves again with life and animation. He could not have been more surprised had Zulima herself appeared before him. Then the fondness of her adieu—the keenness of her reproaches—the manner in which she seemed to cut him off from all hopes of rejoicing her in a future state—all these were as so many daggers planted in his heart. And why should he have incurred them ? What chance of happiness could there be in a second marriage celebrated under such circumstances ? Might not the dead be able, and, if able, also willing to destroy its peace ?

So deep an impression did these reflections make upon him, that he resolved to abandon his intention, and give up all thoughts of a second marriage.

Whether these awful warnings had been so harassing to the baron as to undermine his health, I know not, but about a year after the receipt of the last letter, he was taken ill, and the progress of his malady soon left no hopes

of his recovery. When the physicians had announced the fatal tidings, that but a few hours of life remained to him, he desired the services of religion, and in consequence of this desire was visited by Father Anselm.

The baron received the good Father with a look expressive of satisfaction rather than of sorrow. He had about an hour before received another warning, and that the last. It was still from Zulima, and was in the following brief but expressive words:—

“Come my beloved, the hour has arrived, and we are about to be reunited. Zulima awaits you.”

The letter lay on the pillow of the dying man, and by the side of it a small casket, in which all the former letters had been preserved.

Father Anselm administered the last consolations of religion, and then the baron recounted to him the singular story which our readers have just read. He produced the different letters—he could have no doubt of their being in the handwriting of his beloved wife, and each was descriptive of the circumstances in which he had been placed at the time of its reception—no one could have imitated her handwriting so closely—no one could have so accurately seized her turn of thought and expression—no one could have had a foreknowledge of the design which had occasioned those letters.

Father Anselm was struck with the singular narrative. As a believer in the sacred volume he could not deny the possibility of such an interposition of Providence ; but in modern times no such interposition had been known. Still it was not for him to pronounce that they were forgeries ; besides, he saw that any effort of that kind would have no effect upon the mind of the baron. He knew the letters to be written by Zulima, and he believed that for wise, but to him incomprehensible, purposes, these warnings had been permitted.

He died in that persuasion the same night.

It is almost a pity to draw aside the veil and to dissolve the charm. Many would have been better pleased to have been kept in awe and wonder. However, the day after the baron had been interred, Father Anselm was sent for to the château. He there received the confession of Zulima's foster-sister, who informed him that a few days before the death of the baroness, she had several conferences with her, in which she made her take a solemn oath not to divulge during the baron's life the secret she was about to confide to her, but to obey her instructions to the letter. She was aware of her approaching dissolution, and the idea of the baron's removal from the château, and of his second marriage was insupportable. She placed before her imagination all the probable circumstances which might occur after her death. She foresaw the first deep grief of the baron — his pursuits — the influence which time

would have upon him—the likelihood of his being tired of solitude, and of his wish to dispose of a place which served to revive his grief—the chance of his marrying again—in short, every contingency that might happen from the period of her own death to that of the baron. The first letter was calculated to impress him with awe, and with the conviction that his wife was yet suffered to interpose her advice, and to enter into every thought and intention of his heart. The result was such as has been described. The foster-sister, by living in the château, was necessarily acquainted with every event, and could deposit such letters as were applicable to all the circumstances which had been foreseen.

Father Anselm could not justify the conduct either of Zulima or her-foster sister. But, in consideration of their mutual attachment, and the oath imposed upon the latter, he visited her only with a slight penance and a gentle rebuke.

LEAF THE SEVENTH.

THE ORSINI.



I RETURNED home with Father Anselm soon after the events recorded in the last chapter ; but I remarked a strange alteration in his manner. He, whose temper was so serene, whose general demeanour was unruffled by passion, became on a sudden restless and uneasy. Some secret anxiety seemed to prey upon him. He would walk hastily to and fro ; then stop, as if he had something to divulge ; and then again resume his walk, and leave the house without speaking a word. I tried to discover some ground for this change. I had been his constant companion, and believed myself to be acquainted with every event of his life. I would ask him,—I would solicit his confidence. But, upon reflection, such a proceeding seemed indelicate. What he did not choose to reveal I had no right to enquire into. I resolved, therefore, to wait for an opportunity,—which was speedily afforded me.

I was one day expressing some anxiety to be acquainted with the fate of the Orsini family after he had quitted them. He had been walking, as usual, in his hurried manner,

when he turned suddenly round and confronted me. "How is it that you have penetrated the thoughts of my heart? I have long been wishing to disclose them, and often have determined to do so the next time I saw you; but the next time came, and I had not the courage. Alas! my dear friend, I fear the affairs of this world and the passions of human nature have still too much influence over me, and that my heart and mind are not, as they should be, devoted to the duties of my station, and the sacred commands of my heavenly Master. My soul is not sufficiently raised above this fleeting world; the clay of earth still envelopes me. I am but a feeble man, with all his imperfections, his selfish wishes, and his worldly affections.

"I too have been thinking of the fate of the Orsini, and of one who, if living, must yet be dead to me. Will you believe, can you pardon me, for having indulged the desire of a long pilgrimage—of a visit, ere I am called hence, to the spot where those events occurred which wrecked the happiness of my life?"

"Pardon you, good Father! I enter fully into your feelings. But you are of a feeble frame, and ill able to encounter alone the fatigues of such a journey. I will go with you."

A gleam of pleasure shot across the features of the monk. He grasped my hand.—"It is what I have wished, but dared not hope for. We will set out forthwith, for an inward monitor warns me that what remains for me to do in this life must be done quickly."

Few preparations were necessary, and we set out on our journey two days after this conversation. At the monk's earnest request we took the same route which he had followed in early life. We passed through Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna, exploring the scenes which he had once visited, but which had undergone such changes that he could scarcely recognize them.

From Vienna we took the road to Venice through the Tyrol, and there remained for the space of three days to recruit our strength, and dwell at leisure on the magnificent scenery with which that country abounds.

On the fourth day we resumed our journey, and on the evening of the fifth we arrived at Venice. Father Anselm, with the instincts of filial affection, made his way to the hotel at which his father had alighted years before, when he carried off his mother, the young and beautiful Paulina Orsini. Here we learnt that the aged Count Orsini, and his daughter, the Countess Sophia, were now the only inhabitants of the Orsini palace; for the countess, as soon as she had discovered the deception that had been employed to induce her to marry Spontani, insisted upon living separate from him. Spontani quitted the Venetian territories, and took up his residence at Rome.

So lonely and secluded did the count remain, so completely had he abandoned his former habits, and so strictly had he abjured all company, that his name ceased to be mentioned publicly, and he seemed to be altogether for-

gotten. The Countess Sophia was equally indisposed to intercourse with society. At early dawn indeed she might be seen walking to the neighbouring convent to hear mass; but, closely veiled and feeble in her steps, no one could have recognized the once gay and lovely Sophia.

Father Anselm scrupled to present himself at the Orsini palace without some intimation of his intention being conveyed to the count; but accident created an occasion for facilitating his introduction, without subjecting him to the disagreeable alternative of soliciting an interview, or of intruding himself unasked. He had an old acquaintance at Venice, Father Vasali, who, on the occasion of great festivals, celebrated mass and preached in the cathedral, which was regularly attended by the count and his daughter. Vasali was to preach on Ascension-day, but he was taken ill two days before; and, full of years and good deeds, expired on the evening of the second day. Father Anselm was with him in his dying moments, and received his last wishes; one of which was that he would deliver the Ascension sermon. The time was short, his mind was ill at ease, but the wish of his dying friend was paramount to all other considerations.

The church was crowded, for the death of Vasali was known to few. At the conclusion of the *De Profundis*, Father Anselm ascended the pulpit. His figure, though emaciated, was erect and commanding, his walk measured and feeble. But the moment that he threw back his cowl,

and drew up his figure to its utmost height, he appeared to have lost all traces of weakness and infirmity. His eyes were peculiarly expressive. He surveyed the congregation for a few minutes, and then commenced his discourse with the following befitting tribute to the memory and virtues of the departed churchman :—

“ The will of heaven has been accomplished ! He, from whom you this day expected to receive counsel and consolation, whose piety was a steady and a shining light, whose fortitude strengthened, and whose mildness encouraged the wavering and desponding portions of his flock ;—he, the good shepherd, the faithful pastor, has been removed from this world of frailty and sin ;—he is gone to receive the reward of his long and virtuous labours. Why should I presume to fill the place of such a man ? I, the lowliest and the most unworthy ! But it was his last wish, his last command, that I should be the bearer of his final blessing, as I was the listener to his dying prayers. Oh ! think that he speaks to you from the grave, that he exhorts you, through me, to stand firm and undaunted in the faith, to remember his constant efforts for the welfare of your immortal souls, and his hope in death that his flock may at last be folded in the arms of the one and Eternal Shepherd ! ”

The deep and awful tone of the Father’s voice, the solemn manner in which he delivered the injunctions of the dying Vasali, the pauses in his speech, as if grief had choked his utterance, the exultation with which he dwelt

upon the virtues of him who was to be seen no more, so fixed and chained the attention of the hearers, that you might have heard a whisper in the remotest corner of the church.

He dwelt next upon the solemnity of the occasion, and proceeded to descant upon the fleeting happiness of this life, its uncertain enjoyments, the reverses of fortune, the sudden fall from the summit of human happiness to the abyss of misery and want.

I was so placed as to have a full view both of the count and his daughter. She never raised her head nor put aside her veil ; but the manner in which it was agitated sufficiently proved the depth and agony of her feelings. The count's attention was extreme ; he fixed his eyes upon the Father, as if he had recognized a face he had seen before, but could not recollect when or where.

“ We enter life,” continued the Father, “ with the expectation of long years of happiness. Youth is so full of hope and promise ; and the scene is so enchanting. The sun shines with unclouded brightness ; the air is perfumed with the sweets of flowers ; whilst the birds, soaring as they sing, seem anxious to pay the tribute of their earliest melody at the gates of heaven. Such is the morning of life ! But at noon clouds and storms succeed ; the scene and the seasons, and with them the feelings, are all changed ; worldly projects mar the sincerity of our actions, and base passions disgrace the noblest of God’s works. At eventide all Nature is deformed. The whirlwind has swept over its face, and destroyed the trace of all that was lovely and

beautiful in the morning. Call to mind the mortal feuds that disgrace our annals ! Think of the unnatural practice of fomenting discords that are allowed to live even beyond the grave !

“ Is this the mere creation of fancy ? Is this a picture which the imagination sketches, but which is never exhibited in real life ? Would that it were ! May there not be amongst you the sons of virtuous parents, who have been separated from their families by the unnatural desire of rendering one member rich by the sacrifice of another ; which devotes the daughter to misery that the son may gratify his ambition or his avarice ? Is not this the consequence of your abhorred and impious feuds ? If, then, the unoffending and the innocent be involved in sufferings so severe, in a fate so unmerited, I charge you to profit by such a lesson, and be warned in time. One of these victims may, perhaps, be now amongst us, bowed down and wearied with the load of life, and praying for that hour which shall place him where the ‘ wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.’ ”

“ Believe not, my dearest brethren, that I am desirous of wounding your feelings ; but I *am* desirous of rousing you to a sense of the nothingness of all worldly projects—of the vanity of all hopes that are founded upon the things of this world. It is as though we would write words upon the sand, and expected that the waves should not obliterate them. There is but one hope that can never be disappointed, for it is founded upon the rock of ages. Be virtuous ! be

faithful ! be merciful to each other ! be charitable to all ! 'Comfort and help the weak-hearted, and raise up them that fall !' Be not like the Levite, who 'looked upon the wounded man, and passed by on the other side ;' but be as the Samaritan, who 'had compassion on him, and bound up his wounds.' "

The good Father concluded with another affecting tribute to the memory of Vasali, and with imploring the blessing and the mercy of God upon all His creatures.

He was so exhausted by his effort that he could with difficulty make his way through the crowd that pressed round him, so anxious were they to behold the preacher who had been thus honoured by the object of their veneration and affection.

The next day we visited the Doge's palace, from whence a covered way leads over the "Bridge of Sighs" to the state prison. The good Father seemed to feel a melancholy pleasure in surveying the prison in which he had been so unjustly immured.

We repaired afterwards to the Austrian consulate to make enquiries after the early friend of his youth. He had long since paid the debt of nature. "All are gone," he said, as we turned away—"all whom I loved and esteemed are removed ! and like some barren and solitary rock in the ocean, I alone am left to bear the billows and to brave the storm."

The third day after the Ascension sermon, a major-domo was announced, with a message from the Orsini palace.

The good Father's presence was earnestly entreated. He bowed his head in token of acquiescence and set out. Before his departure, however, I informed him that the count and his daughter had been present at the sermon, and, though they did not seem to recognize him, had evidently applied part of the discourse to themselves. "The hand of God is in this!" he exclaimed; "I may yet be the blessed instrument of saving a sinner."

He repaired to the palace without any attendant. I saw that he wished to commune with himself as he walked, and to arm himself with fortitude. I did not press my attendance upon him, but remained at home uneasy and anxious for his return. When he reached the palace, he rested for some minutes upon a marble seat in the portico, as if desirous of delaying the interview to the latest moment. At length he gave notice of his arrival, and was conducted by the major-domo with the highest respect through rooms which had once echoed to the song and the dance, but were now desolate and deserted.

The count was alone. Father Anselm contemplated his face for a moment, then, drawing his cowl closer, said, "What would the Count Orsini with the humblest of God's ministers?"

"Father," replied the count, "I was in the cathedral on Ascension-day, and it seems as if the Almighty, in His mercy, had inspired you with the power of placing our sins before us in their most appalling light. At times

it appeared as if you were acquainted with my history, for the picture you drew was a vivid representation of its painful phases. I have indeed lived for the world and its ambition; but the world has deserted me, and ambition has deceived me. I had parents whom I converted into slaves. I had a sister whose innocence and beauty ought to have found in me their firmest supporter. For purposes of my own I destroyed her happiness, and suffered her to pass to her grave without one memorial, one proof of affection."

"God pardon you!" groaned Father Anselm.

"Nor is this the whole extent of my guilt. My sister sent me her noble and virtuous son to be the mediator and peace-maker between us. I would not receive him. I hated him, for I had wronged his mother. I contrived his ruin—I threw him into the state prison upon a charge of treason; and knowing he loved my daughter with an affection which she returned, I made her believe that he was false and dissolute, and thus induced her to marry another. I thus destroyed the happiness of *two* innocent beings. Whose guilt can equal mine? My son, instead of being an honour to his name, ruined himself by gaming, and died in his attempt to take the life of another. Such has been the issue of all my ambitious projects—disappointment, crime, sorrow, and remorse.

The Father, whom this confession had deeply moved, threw the cowl off his face, and fixing a steady look upon the count, said,—

“ Man of many sins ! where there is repentance, true, deep, heart-deep, repentance, there is hope ; and though it be the eleventh hour, the twelfth shall not pass away without bringing with it pardon. May God forgive you in your last moments as I forgive you in this ! *I!! Yes ! I!!* ”

The count was awe-struck. The Father, still fixing his eyes upon him, proceeded :—

“ Have years of grief so altered me, that the Count Orsini cannot recognise in Father Anselm the injured Winceslaus ? ”

“ Has the grave given up its tenant to torture me ? Have the dead been sent to give me a foretaste of the punishment that awaits such crimes ? Otho Winceslaus sunk under his sorrows and his wrongs ! ”

“ He abandoned the name of his father and his ancestors. He was no longer the pride and hope of his parents. But he still survives in the wan and wasted form before you.”

“ It is as it should be,” said the count after a solemn pause. “ Behold the effects of presumptuous pride, humbled to the earth, levelled and lowly in the dust.” He then threw himself on his knees before the Father.

“ It is fitting that I should thus implore pardon and mercy, that the haughtiness of the Orsini should be chastised, and the cup of humiliation drained to the dregs. Winceslaus ! forgive me ! ”

The lowliness, the contrition, of the count removed the last feeling of anger, if any remained, from the heart of the good Father. He saw no longer before him the daring and haughty offender, marching to his purpose through guilt and blood ; he recognised in him no longer the ambitious noble treading under feet all the dearest ties that bind man to his family and his kind. He beheld only in the wasted being, clinging to his knees, a man who had deeply sinned and had been deeply punished ; who having been raised to the highest pinnacle of greatness, was now sunk to the lowest point of degradation. His own good and generous nature made him fling himself by the side of the count ; he threw his arms around him, he begged him to be comforted, he assured him that he had long, long since pardoned him, and that he had taken the journey to Venice solely for the purpose of seeing the last of his race, and of employing the last moments of his life in asking forgiveness for their sins, and in offering up prayers for their salvation.

Conduct so noble and so little expected, and alas ! so little merited, wrung the heart of the count. He exhausted himself in alternate praise and censure, blessings and curses ; praise and blessings upon his nephew, censure and curses upon himself. Father Anselm checked him for these sinful ebullitions, soothed him with the kindest expressions, and fortified his good intentions with the assurance of their eternal recompense.

The uncle and nephew remained long together, the former pressing him to pass the remainder of his days under the roof where his presence and his prayers would be of such efficacy. He would have led him on the instant to his cousin, the Countess Spontani, but Father Anselm had not yet fortitude enough for such an interview, and he begged for a few hours to prepare himself for a struggle which he could not contemplate without an inward conviction of his inability to support it. He proposed, with the count's approval, to revisit the palace on the morrow, and in the meantime to announce his intention to the countess, and hoped that her father would kindly be the medium of communication, and so prepare his daughter for the dreaded interview.

The count promised his mediatorial offices, and with this assurance to comfort and encourage him, Father Anselm withdrew, and shortly afterwards rejoined me at the Hotel.

The whole of the night was passed by the good Father in the solitude of his chamber. He would not take any rest, he was often in earnest prayer, and deep groans showed the mortal agony that shook him.

Early in the morning he proceeded to the palace, and, being feeble from want of rest and suffering, I insisted upon accompanying him to the palace gates. After I had left him, I turned to see whether he had entered. He sate himself down for a few minutes, and then with much effort, and leaning upon his staff, passed into the palace.

The count had no sooner opened the door of his daughter's apartment than he retired, and left Father Anselm to enter it alone. His cowl had fallen from his face, and exposed his grief-indentured countenance ; his step was slow, feeble, and tremulous. The countess, who had been reclining upon a couch, started at the sight of her beloved, and, throwing her arms around him, sobbed audibly upon his shoulder. The Father was equally affected, and seemed to gasp for breath. Some minutes were spent in this speechless attitude, when the countess, recovering a little fortitude, stepped back, that she might the better contemplate the features of her beloved. "Wenceslaus ! you have suffered much, and the impress of sickness and sorrow tells a fearful tale !"

"And do I not read the same sad effects in the features of Sophia ?"

"Every day has been a day of woe and misery. Sleep does not refresh me, food does not nourish me, exercise does not strengthen me ; I seem as if my heart would break, and I pray for death."

"It is the will of God, Sophia, that we should live this transitory life in sorrow and suffering, that we may be better prepared for the world to come, where grief shall not intrude, nor wickedness prevail. Would I could speak words of comfort to you ; but I cannot, I cannot ! Oh ! Almighty Father ! soften the sorrows of our hearts !" and with these words the stricken Father sank upon his knees

to pray, with Sophia by his side. And never from two bruised and afflicted hearts did more fervent and sincere prayers ascend to the throne of grace.

Oh that the wicked, who are the causes of such sorrows, could behold the anguish of their victims !

“ Dear, yet agonizing, moment,” exclaimed Sophia, “ that unites us once more before we die, and that enables us, in the remembrance of all that we have suffered, to know and to feel that it has not been the consequence of our own misdeeds ! We have no remorse to feel, no pardon to implore, for the heartless disruption of our plighted vows, or the annihilation of our once fondly-cherished hopes. Our love was not torn asunder by our own hands, nor was the wreck of our earthly happiness our own deed. Blessed is it that we have been permitted to renew the pledge of our former affection, and to pray for blessings upon each other, and humbly but firmly to hope that we may meet again ! ”

Wenceslaus had covered his face with his cowl, to hide the tears that furrowed his wan cheeks. The voice, the look, the words of his beloved had deprived him of all power of utterance. He would have spoken, but he could only clasp his hands in agony, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, beseech Providence not to visit him above his strength.

“ And now, Sophia, we part.”

“ Part ! what ! to meet no more ? to see each other for the last time ? Oh no, no ! it must not—it cannot be ;

oh! do not separate us! Have we not been separated long enough? have we not endured grief enough? Must Winceslaus go forth again a wanderer upon the earth? He has no home, no resting-place; here let us die together!" and she clung close and closer to him. Otho held her in his arms, and looked at her as if he would fain die with that last look: collecting all his fortitude, for one great and final effort, he imprinted a reverential kiss upon her forehead, and, placing her gently upon the couch, rushed out of the palace.

Human endurance could not support a renewal of so afflicting an interview. Otho lingered to ascertain that Sophia had recovered from her prostrate condition, and then, with a slow and feeble step, departed.

But this was not to be their last meeting. He was to see her once again, but it was only to mock his hopes, and to reveal to his agonized senses the marvellous change which an interval of two days had wrought in her appearance. The ravages of that stealthy disease, consumption, had long preyed upon her constitution, and now the powerful reaction upon her already debilitated frame showed but too painfully the mastery it had acquired over her. The family physician confirmed our worst apprehensions, and, in the presence both of her father and an old domestic, announced to her that recovery was hopeless. This disclosure, so fearful to almost all persons, did not shake the serenity of her mind. She entreated only that

they would inform her how long she might be expected to live; and, being assured that she could not survive more than two days, she prepared herself for her last hour with piety and resignation. The first of the two days she spent in solitary prayer and in writing, beseeching her father to communicate the melancholy truth to Otho, and to require his presence on the following day.

The certainty that she had but so short a time to live had softened, though not subdued, that violent grief which had displayed itself at their first interview. She was impressed with the conviction that it became her duty now to moderate those feelings which tied and bound her to a world she was about to quit. She prayed for a calm and resigned mind. It was not so with her lover. He had not been able to gain such a mastery over his feelings, for he knew that the only object of his affection would soon be taken from him. But when he saw the pain it occasioned to her who was dying before him—when he beheld her struggle to preserve a tranquil countenance, and was convinced that his own grief rendered that struggle more difficult—when he found that instead of fitting her mind for eternity by the consolations of religion, and the hope and promise held out by her merciful Redeemer, he was making her still cling to the things of this world, he cast off, by a strong effort, the passions of the man, and stood before her, the humble and holy minister of God.

Thus passed her last moments. As her beloved and

her father hung over the bed of death to receive her last wishes, her features assumed a look of divine sweetness. The hectic flush, which had long quitted her pallid cheeks, now returned to give them a parting glow, the eye resumed its lustre, and a momentary smile played upon her lips. She now herself became the counsellor of peace, the preacher of resignation. But a brief space, and they should all be reunited. Her last action was to place her father's hand in Otho's. She implored Otho never to quit her father, but to abide by him and comfort him "even unto death." The solemn promise was immediately given. "It is enough. Bless you—bless you!" and making an effort to rise and throw her arms around him, she fell back upon her pillow, and in a deep and long sigh expired.

My narrative is concluded. It were unnecessary to add how deep was the grief of Anselm and the count. I remained with them till I saw comparative calmness established, and then bade my valued friend an eternal adieu!

LEAF THE EIGHTH.

THE LAST OF THE FAMILY.



I HAD left the friend of my heart, the companion of my journey, who had made me the confidant of his sorrows and his cares, whose judgment directed me, and whose kindness always soothed me. I had left him behind me, and in this world we were to meet no more. With these gloomy and melancholy feelings I set out for my home.

From Venice I took the road through the Milanese, intending to proceed to Lausanne, Berne, Lucerne, Geneva, and to Lyons, from whence I could travel to Strasbourg. After visiting Milan, the lakes of Como and Maggiore, I proceeded through Baveno on the great Simplon road to Domo d'Ossola, and began to ascend the Val Vedro, which introduces the traveller into the depth of the Alpine recesses. I had agreed with a voiturier to carry me from Milan to Lyons; but he was taken ill before we arrived at the Lago Maggiore, and I was obliged to hire a kind of calèche with two horses, under the guidance of a strong, but ill-favoured young man, who was to carry me to Lyons.

Without detaining my readers with a long account of the scenery of this part of Italy, I shall only say that it is in the highest degree sublime. Here are monstrous masses heaped together in disorder, but producing a sensation of wonder, if not of dread, of the power which had placed them there. How awful was it to contemplate the dark and seemingly interminable paths that wound between these masses ! Here and there were forests of pine and larch, dense and dark, and well fitted for deeds of rapine and murder. In the masses of rock there were deep caverns capable of receiving and concealing whole regiments.

My conductor, as all conductors are in that part of Europe, was anxious to create an interest in the feelings of his employer, by his garrulity and his anecdotes. These anecdotes are never gay or amusing, but wonderful and terrific, and full of robbery and murder. He was very attentive to the effect which they produced on my mind. He was, as I have already said, an ill-favoured man, and the expression of his countenance was particularly forbidding ; it was a mixture of cunning and cruelty. He had known many robberies to have been committed, even in these mountains. There was nothing very alluring in this conversation ; but I did not discourage it. I enquired whether any of these atrocities had been committed lately, and half jocularly, half seriously, hoped he had not been concerned in any of them himself. My guide

immediately made a full stop with his cattle, and, turning towards me, said in a strong dialect,—

“And if I have, am I worse than those Austrian tyrants, (my curses light on them !) who have robbed us of our all. I was a peaceful vintager, and my vineyard was sufficient for my old father, myself, and my beloved Alice. It was on the banks of the Ticino. The Austrians took possession of the country, spoiled my vineyard, and drove myself and my father from it. But, worse than that, the wretches tore my Alice from me, and compelled her to become the mistress of their commander. Ha ! ha ! ha ! (And his laugh was demoniac.) But I repaid him for his brutality. I watched my opportunity and found him asleep. I roused him only to tell him that he had not a minute to live, and instantly stabbed him to the heart. Was it not well done ? From that moment I cast off all love of country and kindred ; took one last look at my ruined vineyard, and fled to the mountains of Calabria. There I found men as reckless and as desperate as myself. I joined a banditti, and, if revenge could gratify us, we have had our fill. At length we were forced from our mountains, and had to traverse Italy. To avoid suspicion we travelled in twos and threes to the place of our destination, occasionally getting acquainted with travellers, that we might be better informed of their business and destination.”

The daring candour of this confession, by which my conductor announced himself to be a robber, whose occupa-

tion it was to intrude himself into the concerns of travellers like myself, was not at all calculated to put me at my ease in the wildest parts of the mountains. However, I affected to disguise my fears, and enquired when we should arrive at Lausanne. "I will consult the horses," he said, with a sneering laugh. "Perhaps they may object to so long a journey." He bent his head over them, and after a minute or two, added, "I thought so; they are of opinion, that they shall be more comfortable in these cool and refreshing mountains." A shrill whistle from a thick mass of trees at no great distance was answered by a whistle from my guide, and before I could lay hold of my arms, the calèche was surrounded by a body of ten or twelve men. I endeavoured to expostulate with the leader, stating myself to be a simple traveller, without any public character or employment, and that I was returning to my home in Germany. I added that I was an Englishman. "Inglesi!" said one of the gang. "They are the allies of the tyrants." The calèche and the guide and myself were now directed to take a path which led to the most secret recess of the mountains, and to one of those caverns which had excited my curiosity and awe.

If the cavern seemed spacious at its entrance it was much more so inside. Several apartments were on each side of a long passage, which led to a hall of large dimensions. It was in great confusion,—boxes, furniture, guns, and sabres, were dispersed on every side; for the

banditti had only just reached their present abode, after being obliged to quit Calabria.

My situation reminded me of Gil Blas in the Robbers' Cave, and I only wished that I might have equal good fortune in effecting my escape. After I had left the calèche and seen my effects taken possession of, I leaned despondingly against one of the pillars. The captain, for so I judged him to be by the deference paid him, advanced towards me, and with more courtesy and polish in his address than I expected to find, said, "You seem depressed, signor. Do not fear us; we are rough in fight, but mild to our prisoners when they conduct themselves properly."

I bowed, and lamented the fate that cut me off from home. He made no reply, but calling Stephano, ordered him to prepare the evening's entertainment. It was plentiful, and the wines of Sicily and Naples circulated in great profusion. They were a gay and thoughtless set, and would have been boisterous in their cups had not a command from their captain kept them within bounds. He called upon one of them to recount one of their adventures for the amusement of such of the band as had not belonged to it when it took place. After a glee sung in good style, Stephano related the following story:—

"One of our chief employments, and which furnished us with the sinews of war—money, was to seize and carry

off persons of rank and wealth, for whose ransom we demanded sums proportionate to their riches. We had contrived a plan for carrying off Lucien Bonaparte, the Prince of Canino, from his palace near Rome. That would have been a prize worth having, for his ransom would have produced a galloping consumption in the bags of every one of the family, from Madame Mère down to Cardinal Fesch. We knew the room to which he had retired. Five of us rushed into it, and hurried off the person we found in it, wrapping him in a cloak and preventing him from making the least noise. We carried him safely to the mountains, where we were received with joyful exclamations. ‘The Prince of Canino must have a royal ransom !’ The cloak and the gag were instantly removed, and our prisoner treated with all that respect which his rank and riches deserved. We prepared his repast at a separate table, served him ourselves, and treated him with due honours. The prince surveyed all this with astonishment, and enquired whom we took him for. A general laugh burst from all of us, till the captain replied that we knew ourselves to be in the presence of the brother of the French emperor. It was now his turn to laugh, but it was a laugh which seemed to be accompanied with a sensation of fear;—it was the laugh of surprise, if I may so express myself, rather than of good-humour.

“‘I, the Prince of Canino, and Bonaparte’s brother !

You are mistaken in your man ; I am his highness's painter.'

"'Pho ! pho ! your highness ! You cannot deceive us. We all of us know you. We could not be mistaken, for we traced you to the room in which we found you.'

"'You are right, gentlemen. The prince was in that room ; but, rendered suspicious and watchful by the many attempts that have been made to rob, and, perhaps, assassinate him, he heard the hurried steps of several persons along the passage that leads to his room, and desiring me to remain, proceeded by a secret door to another part of the palace.'

"For a minute or two the band were staggered. At length the leader pronounced it to be a fabricated story for the purpose of diminishing the amount of his ransom. It was then resolved that the prince should write an order upon his treasurer for a very large sum, upon the payment of which depended his liberation. The prisoner resisted for some time, but the more he resisted the more firmly were we convinced that we had secured the real prince. A messenger was sent off with the draft, and he returned with a letter confirming the painter's account of his escape, and offering three thousand crowns for his release. Our golden hopes were thus disappointed ; but, as a last proof of his not being the prince, we made our prisoner give us a specimen of his art, which he did by grouping the band round their leader whilst he was issuing his orders.

All doubt was now removed, and the poor painter was liberated as soon as we received his ransom.

“Our next exploit was more successful. We had heard of a lawyer at Naples who lived in a retired street, and was immensely rich; but, distrusting the government, kept his money secreted in his house. Now nothing can be more legitimate than a hatred of lawyers who exist by the plunder of others. *Ergo*, to despoil them is a duty we owe to our fellow-creatures. But the lawyer had a double right to our services; for, though he affected in public the greatest austerity of manners, he had inveigled a young female from Sicily, who lived with him as his mistress; but, with the jealousy of the most jealous of Spaniards, he kept her confined to the house, and never suffered her to stir except with him, and concealed by a veil. Here, I say, was a double claim to our services. He is a lawyer, and of course lawful prey. Then he is a hypocrite, for he pretends to chastity and practises fornication. To punish hypocrisy is a virtue. Thirdly, we are opening the door to a prisoner, and restoring the Sicilian female to her liberty. In fact, our project deserved to be classed amongst those noble actions which immortalize the actors concerned in them.

“The lawyer was a cunning fellow, very prone to suspicion, very reluctant to obey any calls that required his presence abroad. He neither liked leaving his treasure nor his mistress. Thieves might deprive him of both in

his absence, or the lady herself might take wing and fly away with some of his sequins.

“For a time all our devices to draw this limb of the law from his den were in vain. But if he was watchful we were active, and at length we hit upon a scheme which placed the lawyer in our power. We had found out that he was law agent and steward to the Cardinal Braschi, whom of course he fleeced, as in duty bound. One of our corps was directed to ingratiate himself with the cardinal’s valet, who was to command the immediate attendance of the lawyer at the cardinal’s villa, about a mile from Naples:—this villa we had hired for the occasion. The lawyer, knowing the cardinal’s valet, did not fail to obey the mandate, and, getting into a carriage which he believed his eminence had sent for him, was conveyed to the villa accompanied by one of us, whom he conceived to be a fresh physician called in to the cardinal. Resolved to extract as much mirth as possible from the adventure, we had prepared a member of the band, who had a deep and sonorous voice, to play the part of the sick cardinal, whom, however, the little lawyer was not to be suffered to see. We arrived at the villa. Everything was silent as it should be when so great a man as a cardinal is indisposed. To the enquiries we made respecting his eminence, the domestic made no reply, but shook his head and lifted up his hands in a most doleful manner. I entered the chamber first, and pretended to have some consultation

with the other physician before I returned to the ante-chamber. I then informed the lawyer that I found his eminence in great danger, and that his voice was so changed that I could hardly recognize it to be the voice with which I had been so familiar. After being thus prepared, the lawyer was introduced.

“‘Had not your eminence,’ I said, ‘better delay any business of importance till after your recovery?’

“‘No, my friend,’ replied the pretended cardinal; ‘time is precious; the hand of death is upon me. Is Giacomo Maggi here?’

“‘He is.’

“‘How much of my revenues is in your hands?’

“‘Ten thousand dollars, so please your reverence.’

“‘Ten thousand only! I thought it was more, much more.’

“‘I do not know exactly, your eminence. Perhaps fifteen, for I recollect there were some tithes paid in yesterday.’

“‘Tis well, Giacomo. But where are they? Are they secure?’

“‘They are always deposited with my own slender means in a vault under my house, the key of which I always carry about me.’

“‘Careful Giacomo! But other sums can be called in.—At this awful moment I would settle all worldly affairs. Call in *all* my monies, and leave me drafts for all outstanding credits.’

"Giacomo hesitated, and thought they might be more safely done at home. But the cardinal insisted, and Giacomo drew drafts to the amount of some thousand dollars.

"And now, Giacomo, as I feel tired, and must take the composing draught which my physicians have prescribed for me, attend me here to-morrow, that I may make a final settlement of my affairs. I shall not forget your faithful services.'

"With many an audible prayer for his eminence's recovery, but with many a secret wish for his death, if the legacy should be a large one, Giacomo took his leave to return home. But we had prepared for him a different destination; and, instead of seeing him to his own home, we took him to ours in the mountains.

"The surprise, the shock of the little lawyer may be conceived. He uttered all sorts of oaths, threatened us with the vengeance of every court and tribunal in the kingdom. The thunders of the Church were to come in aid of the vengeance of the law. He would have every one excommunicated. The cardinal was to devote us to fire and faggot, excommunication, impaling, hanging, *auto da feism*,—nothing was too severe for the perpetrators of such an atrocity. Thus spoke the lawyer in the violence of his rage. We did not attempt to check him, as it was part of our game to add fuel to his fury. We asked him what would become of the cardinal and his own *chère amie* during his absence. At length, having sufficiently enjoyed his raving, we asked him whether he suspected that he was

in the power of men from whom there was no escape or rescue, and whether he thought it possible he should ever revisit Naples or his home, except through the medium of a large ransom. The mere mention of ransom almost deprived him of reason. It was 'the iron that entered into his soul.' He avowed himself a poor man, who had the fortunes of others in his possession, but had no money of his own. However, if we would only permit him to return home, he would undertake to bring back all the money he could scrape together.

"‘Cunning, cunning Giacomo!’ we exclaimed; ‘and who is to guarantee your return? The word of a lawyer! Who would take it? and as to your character! that we know from your profession. Write an order to your lady-love to bring you all the bags in that famous vault which is under the house, and of which you keep the key always about your person.’

“He hesitated; he entreated us to be more merciful. We pointed to a pine tree, which towered far above the rest, and observed,—

“‘You see that sturdy, horizontal branch, which stretches across the sward. *There, there* shall you be suspended if our orders are not obeyed in the morning. Meantime eat, drink, and be merry; but remember, we are not to be trifled with. Long have we waited for you; and there are some here, Master Giacomo, who owe you this good turn.’

“He trembled, but partook of our feast; nay, he

pressed the circulation of the wine cup, hoping, perhaps, to intoxicate us, and then to bribe some one to connive at his escape. After a short conversation apart with our captain, I appeared to take an interest in his distress, and to listen to his proposals. They were that I should be the bearer of a note to his housekeeper, apprising her of his peril, and desiring her to send at night-fall a sufficient force for his release, for which service I was to receive one thousand dollars.

“‘Agreed!’ said I; ‘but as our captain must see your order, you must give me the one you mention, which I will conceal, and write another for his inspection, which I will produce, directing your housekeeper to be herself the bearer of all the treasures in your vault. In this order you must enclose the key. This second paper will be given to me, and I shall proceed with both to Naples. I will destroy the latter on the way, so that the former one only will be executed.’

“I delivered the first order to our captain, and departed next morning with the second. ‘The lawyer and his bags!’ shouted out some of the band—‘The lady and the bags!’ shouted others. I went my way, the lawyer giving me one of those significant looks which seemed to say, ‘We understand each other!’

“I found everything in confusion at Giacomo’s. No tidings had been heard of him; he had not been to the cardinal’s, nor had he been sent for. I asked for the Sicilian lady. At first, the servant would have denied her; but, informing

her that I had a letter from the lawyer, I was instantly admitted to her presence. Truth obliges me to say that if any one felt uneasiness at the absence of Giacomo, it was not his mistress. She was a laughing, thoughtless girl, and made herself merry at the account of the lawyer's surprise and fright. She wished she could have seen the little man in his fits, and begged us to keep him with us by all means. I assured her that at present he was in very safe custody, and that his guardians were so fond of him that they would not part with him without the payment of a large sum, of which she was to be the bearer. I then gave her his note and the key; and, making use of the interval to receive the drafts which Giacomo had drawn, returned in the evening that we might load the bags upon mules, and leave the city without exciting suspicion.

“ Meanwhile the lawyer was far from being at his ease. Two of the band were set to watch him, and the captain, in order to torment him, affected to believe that he had been tampering with his troop. As day declined, he put on a sterner aspect, and threatened to hang him upon the pine tree if he found out that any treachery had been practised. The lawyer invoked all the saints in the calendar, to bear testimony to his innocence; but ever and anon he would advance to the brow of the mountain, fixing his eyes upon the road which wound around it in the direction of Naples.

“ Our captain now assumed an air of uneasiness and impatience; he feigned a look of surprise and apprehension.

‘The dust rises in clouds at the foot of the mountain. There must be horsemen. By St. Januarius, there is a troop of horse! We are betrayed! Bring the lawyer here, and hang him from that branch the moment the first horseman appears!’

“‘Spare me! spare me! noble captain. I know the officer. I will intercede for you. I sent for—that is, I expected him.’

“‘Oh you did, friend Giacomo? Then bid *buona notte* to the world.’

“Giacomo struggled and clung to the captain’s knees; but he spurned him off, and the rope was put round his neck.

“‘One quarter-of-an-hour, and no more. Look out, Vincentio, now. Are the horsemen far up the mountain?’

“‘I see no horsemen, but three mules, heavily laden; on one of them is a female, and the last bears a soldier. No, by heaven, ’tis Stephano!—Stephano and the bags—Stephano and the lady!’

“‘Huzza! take off the rope from the lawyer’s neck. His hour is not yet come.’

“As soon as Stephano had reached the crest of the mountain with Beauty and the bags, he bowed to the lawyer with a smile as if he had executed his orders most faithfully. Giacomo looked as if his eyes would have started from their sockets.

“‘Was this the order I gave you?’ he said in an undertone.

“‘I dared not execute it,’ I replied, loud enough for the captain to hear.

“‘There is some mystery here, my friends,’ said the captain. ‘Speak out, Stephano! There has been an attempt to corrupt the fidelity of my band. That is death by our laws.’

“The lawyer protested his innocence over and over again, and appealed to me. I turned my head away in seeming confusion.

“‘Attend, comrades,’ said our captain in a voice and manner that made the lawyer tremble. ‘Stand forth, Giacomo Maggi! Look at him! He protests his innocence—he says he gave but one order, and that order has been obeyed; the lady and the money have done us the honour to place themselves under our protection. But there was another order—a secret one—which would have endangered the safety of us all. It was to direct the lady to apply for a troop of soldiers, who were to attack and secure us.’ And he read the order aloud.

“A cry of indignation burst from the whole band. Giacomo felt that his last hour was come. The voice of the band was for instant death. The lawyer cast himself before us in an agony of fear; his knees trembled—his whole frame was convulsed. Lucien Bonaparte’s painter would have had a fine subject for his pencil: But I thought that as our object was not really to put the lawyer to death, we had done quite enough to frighten him.

“I interfered in his behalf—‘We have got his treasures

and his lady-love. Of what benefit would be his miserable carcass? Let him live and carry on his work of pillage. Besides, the cardinal, who is dying, has appointed him to make his will, and he is to have a large legacy.'

"A loud laugh burst from the whole band.

"'The cardinal! the cardinal! His eminence must be too ill. What says his physician?' and our captain addressed himself to me.

"'That the febrifuge was so efficacious as to enable his eminence to get out of bed and pay us a visit the moment Giacomo left him. But ask the cardinal himself?'

"Vincentio, who had personated the cardinal, assumed the deep, sonorous tone he had then used: 'Giacomo Maggi! how much of my revenues is in your hands? Ten thousand dollars! I thought more, much more. But 'tis well. Where are they? Call in *all* my monies. I have but a short time to arrange my worldly affairs. To-morrow I will make a final settlement, and shall not forget your faithful services.'

"Convulsions of laughter followed this repetition of the cardinal's directions, and Giacomo became the laughing-stock of the whole band.

"'But be stirring,' said our captain, 'or Giacomo will be too late for the cardinal. Give him one of the mules. And now farewell, my little lawyer—if you can recommend any rich client of yours to our notice, you shall be well feed. There is the key of your vault, take precious care of it. Give our duty to the cardinal, and tell him he has our

prayers for his recovery. And don't forget yourself when you make his will,—call in *all* his monies. Ha! ha! ha!'

"The poor lawyer was then suffered to depart amidst the shouts of the whole troop."

This adventure gave great amusement to all the company, except myself, who, though not so rich as the lawyer, nor possessed of so charming a *chère amie*, felt that I had fallen into the same hands, and that my release would not be effected without the payment of a ransom.

The following song concluded the festivities of the night.

THE ROBBER'S SONG.

Here's a health to all robbers of ev'ry degree,
And the toast includes many besides you and me;
We're robbers in practice, and robbers in name,—
We dislike to be thought so, but rob all the same!

'Tis a passion all ranks and all stations pervades,
The life-blood that feeds all professions and trades;
The barrister robs the attorney, and he
Robs his client, to pay the keen barrister's fee.

The client, when robb'd of his all, runs away,
And the lawyer is robb'd when he loses his prey.
The tradesman's a robber for giving short weight,
And the publican robs with his chalk on the slate.

The tax-gath'rer robs, as in duty he's bound,
But for conscience sake takes but one-fourth of the pound;
The state robs the people, the people the state,
The great rob the little, the little the great.

So here's to all robbers of ev'ry degree,
The toast includes many besides you and me;
We're robbers in practice, and robbers in name,—
We dislike to be thought so, but rob all the same!

To sleep under such circumstances was impossible. I had no fears for my life, but I might be detained for a long time, by the demand of a ransom larger than I could pay. However, I resolved to know the worst at once, and next day, when the whole band were assembled, I addressed them thus:—

“Gentlemen, I am, as I told you, a traveller returning to his home after a fatiguing journey. I am far from being rich, and therefore wholly unable to pay a large ransom. You will be convinced of this when you examine my valise. Here is the key.”

The captain immediately ordered it to be brought to him and opened. Besides wearing apparel there were several letters, a purse with sufficient money to carry me home, and a small casket in which were three rings. One had been given me by the count, in remembrance of his daughter; the second as a proof of his own esteem; the third was a token of friendship from Father Anselm. The papers were laid aside as not worth reading; but the casket and the rings fixed the attention of the captain. The ring, in remembrance of the countess, had an inscription: “*Sophia! infelix Sophia! Nata —, mortua —.*” The count’s had the arms of the Orsini. As soon as he cast his eye upon them, he struck the table with his hand, and vehemently exclaimed,—“Torments and furies! How came this into your possession?” The band stared at us both in mute astonishment. Such a burst of passion, in such unmeasured language, had never before escaped him.

“This instant satisfy me, or your head shall roll on yonder sod.”

“There needs no threat to make me. I came from Venice, where I had left my friend at the palace of Count Orsini, from whom I received this ring as a token of his esteem. This other was given me in remembrance of his daughter; and the third by Father Anselm, formerly Count Otho Winceslaus.”

“Beware how you trifle with me. You have mentioned names which I dare not trust myself to repeat. You have called up recollections which I would not willingly have had revived. All former scenes now rush upon my memory in their blackest horror. Have I not broken every tie and link—abandoned all—fled from all—abjured name and country to be the ——”

The end of the sentence remained unfinished, for he fell back exhausted in his chair.

There was for some time a deep silence. At length several of the band questioned me. I was unable to comprehend it. The effect seemed so inadequate to the cause—so extraordinary.

When the captain had recovered some degree of tranquillity, he cast a searching look round him, and then fixed his eye sternly upon me. I returned his look with a steady gaze, which seemed to demand some explanation of the strange and incoherent sentences he had uttered. The band also seemed to expect some account of the motives

of his conduct. They began to think that he had recognized a former enemy in me—some man who had done him a grievous injury. I saw in their eyes the blackening scowl of suspicion, which might lead to fatal consequences.

He walked up and down the cavern with an uneasy step, and at length said to his comrades,—“The recollections which this person has brought to my mind require that I should examine him more closely, and alone. Let the valise be carried to my apartment.” And, turning to me, he said, “Follow me!”

We retired to his room, and after being seated, he began,—

“My conduct and expressions seem to have surprised you.”

“They have.”

“And do you not think that I must have felt surprise at beholding tokens, and hearing names which I have not suffered to pass my lips for years?”

“But I am in perfect ignorance of your history, and even name. To convince you, however, that the account I gave you is true, here are letters from all the personages I have mentioned. This is a letter of thanks from a lady for the good offices I performed towards one who loved her. It is from the Countess Sophia, who now sleeps in the tomb of her ancestors.”

“Sophia Orsini dead! Dead! did you say? and, perhaps, of grief?”

“Of grief, most surely.”

“And the count, her father,—you spoke of him?”

“This is a letter in which he informs me of the dying wish of his daughter;—that Otho Winceslaus, known then as Father Anselm, should remain to cheer the last days of her afflicted and repentant father.”

“And have such conflicting elements met at last? As soon should I have expected the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the blind to see.”

“They have indeed; and, in the place of that bitter hatred and unseemly discord which envenomed the souls of both alike, a mutual feeling of regard and affection has sprung up, and which, under the favour of heaven, may yet, I trust, have time to ripen, and ‘bring forth fruits meet for repentance.’”

“But what about the son, the young and gallant Stanislaus?”

“He died before his sister, the hapless Sophia—aided and abetted by the count, his father, in a dastardly attack upon Otho Winceslaus, he was slain in the hall of his own palace.”

“Was it indeed so?”

“It was; and when the aged count shall descend with his ancestral honours into the ancestral tomb, the noble house of the Orsini will not have a representative left to carry down its name to future generations: and thus the remembrance of its race and name alike will be lost in the womb of time.”

“ Not so ; the powerful family of the Orsini, whose rise dates anterior to that of either Guelph or Ghibelline,—aye, older and more renowned than that of the Colonna itself—a family that has given more than one Doge to Venice, and aspired even to fill the Papal chair—that family, I tell you, defies both time and circumstance to obliterate its records from the page of history, or detract aught from the grandeur of its position, so long as the state of Venice shall remain, or a noble dwell within its gates.”

“ Possibly : I grant it may be so ; but, in thus deferring to your opinion, I am forced to adopt the maxim that—

‘ The evil that men do lives after them ;
‘ The good is oft interred with their bones.’

But why should this matter be one (as apparently it is) of such great moment and interest to you ? Surely it is better to be altogether forgotten than to be remembered only by the magnitude of one’s vices ; and those, forsooth, of the Count Orsini and his son were neither few nor light ; though the charitable injunction, ‘ *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*,’ should lead us to hope that these vices may be atoned for, in the case of the count, by a hearty and sincere repentance ; and in that of his son, by the merciful interposition which cut him off in the career of sin, that would otherwise, perhaps, have increased ‘ *pari passū*’ with his increasing years. Such, then, has been the fate of the Orsini—so proud of their rank—so soaring in their projects of ambition—so persevering in their wicked de-

signs—and so unscrupulous as to the means of accomplishing them. In a few brief years the grave will have enclosed them all, and not one of the line will survive to perpetuate the name of that illustrious house; though, for aught I know, there may yet exist in a remote corner of the globe some outcast member of this family, whose deeds may have acquired a wider notoriety, and will perhaps meet with a retribution greater even than that with which the count and his son have been visited. Who knows, for instance, but that in the person of some bandit chief——”

“Peace, slanderer! or, by the sacred name of God, which till now has never passed these lips without the profanation of an oath, your blood shall be shed on the very spot on which you stand. Answer me, villain, and that without prevarication or delay! How have you become possessed of a secret which not even the chosen associate of my band, no, nor my deadliest foe (for friend, unhappily, I have none), has ever been able to penetrate or discover? Look well at me, sir! and see if you can trace, in these furrowed cheeks, these rough and indented features, and in this embrowned complexion, any single point of resemblance that should warrant you in ascribing to me the character and condition of an *outcast* member of the Orsini family?”

At this sudden outburst of indignation, my mind so completely lost its balance, and my thoughts became so utterly dispersed, by the fearful reality which my simple

and unmeaning hypothesis had created, that, what between my astonishment at the half-admitted truth of my speculative surmise, (inferred from the remarkable manner in which he had applied my observation to himself,) and my fears for the consequences that might follow from anything I might say or do, to confirm him in his belief that I had really a knowledge of his antecedents, I replied in as calm and level a voice as I could command,—

“I am possessed of no secret whatever, having reference to yourself, nor can I detect the faintest resemblance in your form or features to any member of the Orsini family with whom I have ever been acquainted.”

I looked him directly in the face as I made this declaration. He advanced a step or two forward, and turning upon me the full force of his dark searching eyes, said, in an under-tone,—

“Enough! I believe your word, but doubt the impression your mind might have conceived from what has passed. Now, mark me! a solemn oath that you will never, in any way, or under any circumstances, refer to this conversation, nor divulge to any living soul the secret I am about to impart to you, under the firm persuasion that you have already half-divined it. The alternative is instant death, as the only safeguard and protection against disclosures that would endanger both my liberty and my life.”

I took the required oath, and pledged myself to an observance of the closest secrecy.

“Enough!” again exclaimed the captain, in the same subdued tone as before. “Now follow me!” and he led the way into an interior apartment, which he informed me was the council room. I was in too excited a condition to examine it minutely, but in the centre was a large oval stone table, unpolished, and resting on four upright piles of oak about a foot in diameter, and at each side was a rude bench, also of oak. At the top and bottom stood two massive and moveable oak chairs, with large arms, on which were carved some quaint devices, evidently illustrative of some kind of masonic emblems by which the conduct and actions of this lawless band were regulated and determined. The captain pointed to one of these chairs, in which I immediately seated myself. He brought, or rather dragged, the other from the opposite end, and placed it close by the side of mine. He then extended his hand in token of his good faith, and I met his grasp with a heartiness that must have conveyed to him the assurance of my own.

“You see,” he now said, “in the person of the leader of this band, a son,—an only son,—of Cosimo Orsini, who was the youngest and only surviving brother of the Count Orsini. My father married very early in life, and my mother, unhappily for me, died when I was but two years old. At the age of eighteen I entered

the army. Little care had been bestowed on my education, my father having regard only to the accumulation of wealth, his portion of inheritance as a younger son not sufficing for the grandeur of his ideas, nor for the multiplicity of wants which those ideas had created. He embarked in commercial enterprises, against the counsel and advice of the count, became utterly ruined, and, disdaining all offers of assistance from his brother, left Venice for the Papal States, and died there in obscurity about twelve years ago. When my father quitted Venice, I was adopted by a near relative of my mother's, who enabled me, by a handsome provision, to maintain my rank and position in the army. In my regiment was a young Piedmontese, the Baron Isola. He was about two years my junior, and at his father's death had inherited a good fortune, which, I presume, was all squandered away, as I did not remain long enough in the regiment to witness the last phase of its absorption at the gaming-table. This Baron Isola had evinced a most passionate desire for gambling, and I soon became inoculated with the fatal mania. There was nobody to control us, and we plunged into a vortex of dissipation, of which the gaming-table was not the only, perhaps not the most injurious, element. We pursued our career of pleasure with an utter disregard for every scruple of honour, and suffered no obstacle to stand between the object of our desire and its gratification. To supply

the rapacity of the gamesters, the Baron Isola had recourse to the sale of a portion of his estates in Piedmont; but I, having neither estate nor any fund to draw from, beyond my allowance, was reduced to the necessity of raising the wind by stratagems and devices to which now, as the leader of a troop of bandits, I could not stoop without a sense of the deepest humiliation. We had for some time associated ourselves with men as nobly born, and as desperate in circumstances as ourselves. From our position in society we were enabled to mix in the highest circles, and found no difficulty in decoying men of wealth to our respective hotels, and particularly such foreigners as we knew to be possessed of ample means.

Our success was great, for strangers had not the least chance against us. But it was chiefly the English whom we courted. Rich, daring, and unsuspecting, we easily lured them to our haunts, where sumptuous dinners and the choicest wines prepared them for the gaming-table. Indiscreet by nature, and more so after having indulged in the pleasures of feasting, they betted largely, and always unsuccessfully; but they did not bear their losses with patience. They would break out into paroxysms of rage, throw dice and cards out of the window, and then return with additional rashness and with the same bad fortune. At length one of our party, neglecting his usual caution, or thinking that his antagonist was off his guard, ventured

to substitute a pair of false dice, but so clumsily, that the Englishman detected the cheat, and struck the offender to the ground, pronouncing all the members of the bank to be swindlers, whose conduct he should immediately expose to the government. This was to be avoided at any risk, and the Englishman was of course found dead in the street at some little distance from our hotel.

“The attention of the government had been already drawn to us. The Englishman had a friend who, though he did not play himself, occasionally accompanied him to the gaming-table, and who now suspected that he might, perhaps, have been a considerable winner, and assassinated for his gains on his way home. He accordingly concerted with the government a plan for our detection. Some of the police were dressed in the uniform of English officers, and were introduced by the Englishman, who informed us, with a significant look, that his friends could speak no language but their own, and of which he knew us to be totally ignorant. At the same time, they had great presumption and confidence, though totally ignorant of the game. They played; and, to our astonishment, succeeded in every throw. Immense sums of money now changed sides, and the bank was in danger of breaking. No alternative remained but a recourse to those practices which were always resorted to in cases of necessity. The tables were turned in our favour, and the sums we had lost returned to us as quickly as they had left us. On a sudden,

however, the dice were seized and opened, and the imposition was at once discovered. The pretended English officers, now addressing us in good Italian, informed us who they were, and proceeded to arrest us. We fought and resisted as long as possible; two of our party were killed, and the same number of the police. All the rest of my companions were secured and carried off. I saved myself by jumping out of the window.

“Character, credit, fortune, all were now gone. Where was I to seek shelter for my wretched guilty head? I had no home to return to—no father, mother, or sister to whose love I could appeal in my distress. My pride would not permit of my seeking protection from the Count Orsini, as my cousin Stanislaus had systematically shunned me whenever we chanced to meet at one of the many gambling-tables he frequented. I wandered all night, and hid myself in the day in thick woods, to escape the pursuit which I knew would be ordered by the state. In this dreadful plight, I traversed the Roman States, and threw myself into the wild mountains of Calabria. There, a lost and desperate man, whose character nothing could restore, and who had neither a country nor friends, I changed my name to Vanoni, and consented to become the leader of a band of robbers.

“Any detail of the many adventures in which I have been engaged it would neither be pleasant to you to hear, nor to me to recount. Enterprise and danger are congenial

to my feelings ; but oh ! the baseness and meanness of my occupation !—the leader of a band of robbers ! Yet disgraceful as it is, I see no chance of abandoning it. What country would suffer me to be at peace ? What society would associate with me ? Where could I have the opportunity of repairing past crimes by repentance and a new course of life ? No, no ! The finger of scorn would be constantly pointed at me. I should see contempt in every eye ; I should hear reproach from every tongue. To be the object of hatred, or of vengeance—that I can bear ; but to live an object of contempt is worse even than torture, or the most ignominious of deaths. No, no !

“One act of justice, however, shall be done forthwith : the friend of the Orsini shall not have to say that he received injury and insult from the last of the family. You shall be conducted to Lyons by a more trustworthy guide than the one by whom you were inveigled to our haunts.

“There is one favour, however, which you can do to a friend of mine, and consequently to me. We have among us a person whom we secured in one of our expeditions, and who has been with us a long time. He has never been one of our band, nor would ever take part in any of our expeditions. But he has been useful to us by his skill in medicine, and to that skill many of my men owe their lives. Between him and myself a friendship was established, and the soothing of many an hour, in which I have been nearly overwhelmed with sorrow, I owe to

him. His is a fearful tale, but, as it was communicated to me in confidence, it must be communicated to you in a similar manner. He is now sixty, perhaps more. Age has brought with it some of its concomitant infirmities; and the life we lead, and the mountains we inhabit, are no longer fit for him. He wishes to retire to Germany, where he can find some humble abode, in which he may pass the remainder of his days. Will you take him with you, and give him the benefit of your advice and protection?" This I promised with the utmost readiness, and the companion of my journey was immediately introduced as M. Verseuli.

As soon as my calèche could be got ready, we took our leave of the leader and his troop, who seemed to part with my companion with great reluctance. "Farewell!" said the leader, as he took me aside. "Sometimes bestow a thought upon me; and let the severity of your censure be softened by the recollection of the shame and remorse that gnaw the heart of the last of the Orsini!"

We set off immediately.

LEAF THE NINTH.

THE CONVENTIONALIST.



FOR some miles after we had left the mountains we remained silent, as if each were pondering over the scene and the persons he had just quitted. At length Verseuli exclaimed, "Poor Vanoni—or, rather, Orsini! what a life of wretchedness and guilt!—the consequence of early indulgence and early orphanage. The same passions which lead to evil might have been productive of the noblest results had they been under the guidance of a virtuous father or mother anxious for the welfare of their son. The rock on which he split was freedom of action, which had no proper direction, and which, like a vessel without pilot or rudder, was at the mercy of every wind and wave. Those very qualities, which shone so conspicuously at the gambling-house and the brothel, and which can now direct the exploits and curb the turbulent dispositions of robbers, might, under more favourable circumstances, have achieved for him a name and a station amongst the excellent men who live in the page of history, and the gratitude of mankind. How often the after-life takes its colour and its

tendency from the first step. Early errors are scarcely ever repaired."

Such were the first remarks of Verseuli, and he closed them with the following:—

"If I am not entitled, from my own experience, to be the censurer of others, it at all events enables me to foretell the consequences which must result from certain actions, and to give to others that advice and warning which I have, alas! but too much neglected myself."

Our conversation now turned naturally upon Orsini, whose sad and disgraceful fate we both anticipated, as he could never be prevailed upon to abandon his present occupation. We knew full well that, except in the cloisters of a monastery, there was no spot to which he could retire in safety.*

My fellow-traveller had evidently mixed much in life, and I did not forget what Orsini had told me, that his was a fearful history.

We reached Lyons without any event of importance, and there we quitted the calèche and our driver, by whom

* The count had sent Father Anselm to his nephew in the hope of reclaiming him from his unworthy pursuits, and inducing him to seek in some other country a more honourable career. But the uncle's remonstrances were fruitless; and his nephew perished in a desperate attempt to suprise the château of an Italian nobleman—Domo d'Ossola. He was borne off the field by the band, and buried in a cavern in one of the mountains. Under the name of "Vanoni," the only inscription upon his tomb, no one can suspect that he is looking upon the grave of the last of the illustrious race of Orsini.

we sent letters to Orsini. Verseuli accompanied his with a large packet of such drugs as might be useful to the band.

As soon as the driver had departed, one of the officers of the police came to our hotel, and delivered me a letter from the sub-prefect, requiring my immediate attendance. I obeyed accordingly, and the sub-prefect abruptly asked me if I was well acquainted with my fellow-traveller. I reflected that my companion might have motives for not being known, and that it might excite or confirm any suspicion against him if I replied that he was but an acquaintance of yesterday. I answered at once that he had been the intimate friend of the nephew of an illustrious nobleman at Venice with whom I had been acquainted ; that he had long resided in Italy, and was now going to live with me in Germany. The sub-prefect paused, and was silent for several minutes. At length he took out of a portfolio the portrait and *signalement* of a person whose name he concealed by placing a card over it. "Is it not," he said, "the exact likeness of your friend's face, and the exact description of his figure?" It was indeed so exact that I had no doubt of his being the person. However, I affected to say that it did not strike me to be more than a general resemblance, which we often see between two persons not at all connected by any ties of kindred or of country. I did not attempt to challenge his opinion on any other ground, and, as he did not press the point further,

I imputed the result of his apparent indifference to the goodness of his heart.

“I am inclined,” he said, “to accept your version rather than act on my own belief, because I am not desirous of aggravating the sorrows of any man, or of being the means of putting his life in peril. Imprisonment for life, or perhaps the punishment of death, would be the lot of the man whose identity with that portrait could be satisfactorily established. We then parted, and upon my return to the hotel, I immediately informed Verseuli of my conference with the sub-prefect. He did not change countenance, though I thought I observed a slight convulsion of the under lip. I proposed that we should set off for Strasbourg forthwith,—a proposal which met with his ready concurrence. We arrived at Strasbourg at night, and thereby escaped any particular survey of our persons, and any interrogatories as to our destination. The next morning I went to the prefecture, and by dint of a few cogent arguments procured leave for us to quit the city, and pass to the other side of the Rhine. I doubt not the feelings of my fellow-traveller were unpleasant enough during the interval between our departure and our landing on the German side of the Rhine; but he had been so intimate with danger, that no trace of fear or anxiety was discoverable in his look or manner. He seemed to be a man whose mind was prepared for every contingency.

The interest I had shown in his service, and the anxiety

I had evinced for his safety, entitled me to his confidence, which he gave me to the fullest extent, as soon as we had quitted the French territories, and begun our journey to the heath. I shall continue calling him by the name he assumed. His history he recounted as follows :—

“ Very early in life I became intimate with the late Duke of Orleans, my father having been one of his tutors. I was a few years younger than he was, but he became extremely attached to me, and I was the companion of his pleasures, as well as the sharer of his studies. You have heard, perhaps, that there was an abruptness in his behaviour, a want of delicacy, which made him particularly obnoxious at court, both to Louis XVI. and to the queen. The former disliked him for the immorality of his private life, the latter for his deficiency in those attentions which were due to her elevated situation and to the elegance of her manners. The duke, instead of attempting to remove this dislike, imbibed a deep hatred of the royal family, and eagerly availed himself of every opportunity for giving currency and credit to the scandalous anecdotes against them. He took into his confidence all those who were disaffected to the government, and who wished to give to France such a constitution as she had enabled the Americans to establish upon their separation from England. In them the wish might proceed from a real love of freedom; in him it arose from a desire to gratify his

revenge against the reigning family, and from a hope that the gratification of that revenge might throw the power of the state into his hands. His immense fortune afforded him the means of creating discontent amongst the populace. Sometimes he effected this by the monopoly of corn, and thus increasing the price of bread, which increase was imputed to the court, and particularly to the influence of the queen ; at other times by diminishing the demand for labour, by corrupting the military, and exciting insurrections. In these manœuvres he was actively supported by many of those who afterwards were such prominent actors on the revolutionary stage. They made him their dupe, whilst he considered them merely as the flexible agents of his crooked and treacherous machinations.

“The events of the year 1789 opened a wider field for his intrigues. In the National Assembly he was one of the most active in bringing about the suppression of privileges and of feudal rights and titles. Mirabeau, Condorcet, and others, laughed in private at the folly of the man who had lent himself to this act of suicide, though in public they dignified it with the name of the most exalted patriotism. I take shame to myself for having been blinded by their representations ; but I was young. The example of America was recommended in speeches and in pamphlets by those who were the real friends of liberty, as well as by those to whom any change is acceptable.

“After the suppression of privileges and feudal rights,

the revolutionary torrent became too strong to be resisted by the more moderate and by those who were desirous of repairing the edifice but not of destroying it. Prudence was designated as indifference to the cause of freedom; moderation was characterized as little less than treason. Then was exhibited the spectacle of the most illustrious families trampling upon the records of their ancestors, and giving their title-deeds and patents of nobility to the flames round which the populace were dancing 'in transport and rude harmony.' Religious orders and monasteries were all suppressed; and the nobles, who believed that they had established their claims to the gratitude of their country by the sweeping sacrifices made to liberty and equality, saw their castles and their property devoted to pillage and conflagration, as monuments of an aristocracy which ought not to survive the extinction of the privileges of their order. Nor could the nobles really consider this as any other than the natural effect of their own conduct. They had indeed helped to destroy their own castles; they had proclaimed to the nation that nobility was an abomination,—that they had exercised a tyrannical power, (which the possession of these exclusive privileges had given them,) for the oppression of their tenants and dependants. The populace viewed these castles as so many fortresses which had offered the means of attacking them with impunity, and they resolved that they should no longer remain as monuments and mementoes of their former degradation.

“Towards the end of the year 1791, after the first constitution had been accepted by Louis XVI., the second National Legislative Assembly was convoked, (though the Orleanists had endeavoured in the National Assembly to procure a decree for deposing the king,) and I was elected a member of it. I need not enter into a history of the proceedings of that Assembly; but, during the whole of its sittings, the Duke of Orleans never ceased caballing against the peace of the royal family. Every means that could possibly inflame the passions of the populace were resorted to. The king was pronounced to be insincere, and the queen treacherous. We all look with horror upon the excesses of an infuriated rabble who, indiscriminate in their rage and madness, involve the innocent with the guilty, the feeble with the strong, the innocence of infancy with the helplessness of old age, in the same punishment and ruin. But let us reserve part of our execration for those who set this machine in motion; who secretly and safely prepared these scenes of horror, and charged the mine which, on its explosion, was to produce such wide-spread destruction. It has been too much the fashion to involve Louis XVI. in indiscriminate blame for the patience of his endurance, and his total want of firm resistance to the projects of the revolutionists. But, having let the first opportunity slip, he had no longer the power of repairing his error, or recovering his position. Had Broglie taken a strong position on the heights of Montmartre, and menaced Paris, the revolution might perhaps have been destroyed in embryo;

or, had the tennis-court been surrounded by a military force, and the principal agitators arrested, such an act of firmness might, perhaps, have stemmed the revolutionary tide. Perhaps! But counsels of such vigour, even had they been adopted, might have been unavailing, for the military would probably have refused to act. Disaffection had made rapid strides among them from the period of the taking of the Bastille, where hundreds of victims to the tyranny of the court were said to be immured, and where one prisoner only was found, whose imprisonment was not the consequence of any offence against the state, nor of any arbitrary act on the part of the government.

“ It is true that Louis XVI. might have resisted the demands of the infuriated mob, and would have died more nobly, perhaps, at the head of the small band which remained faithful to him : but he would neither have checked the torrent, nor have driven back the tide. With our pity for his misfortunes, he would indeed have blended a feeling of admiration for his constancy and firmness ; but his resistance would have been as ineffectual to control the mighty force of the revolutionary element, as a pebble cast into the sea would be to arrest the influx of the ocean-wave in its progress towards the shore. The crown fell from his head the moment he put on the *bonnet rouge*, on the 20th June, 1792.

“ These reflections may appear extraordinary to you, when I come to touch upon a future period of my life ; but they have been the result of meditation in retirement,

when the impulse which had goaded me at a former period had lost its passion and its power.

“ After the 10th of August the king ceased to reign even nominally ; and short was his passage from the throne to the scaffold. Between the period when he took refuge in the National Assembly (such a refuge as a man finds who is forced to seek an asylum amongst his enemies) and the fatal 21st of January, the intrigues of the Orleanists were incessant. Being so intimate with the duke, I became necessarily acquainted with his most secret advisers. Robespierre, Danton, and Couthon were amongst the principal ones—Marat was an auxiliary. Robespierre had a pale and cadaverous cheek, with eyes which, being generally bloodshot, imparted an expression of cruelty mixed with cunning. There was none of that daring and defiant look so remarkable in Danton and Couthon. Robespierre was essentially a coward, and he sent his victims to the guillotine not so much with the view of crushing any hostility to the revolution, as with a determination to remove all persons who might be thought to endanger his own safety.

“ If ever there was a human being who, more than another, delighted in blood, that man was Danton. By a cruel mockery he was appointed minister of justice, and one of his first acts was to clear the prisons of the priests and nobles with whom they were crowded. For three days the work of butchery was carried on without the least interference on the part of the Legislative Assembly. Some of

the most venerable priests were massacred, in the sanctuary even of the church, and before the very altar itself.

“ The Legislative Assembly,—contemptible from its cowardice and infamous for its crimes,—was replaced by the National Convention, of which I became a member. The first act of their authority was the abolition of royalty, and the next was the trial of the king, who, with his family, was kept a close prisoner in the Temple. I was a member of the Committee of Public Safety, and the debates upon the fate of the king were frequent and violent. At one of them, a member of the Committee urged the policy of banishment, which would at once proclaim to the world our reluctance to establish the Republic in blood, and our conviction of being strong enough to repel any attempts which foreign powers might make, even with the advantage of possessing the persons of the royal family.

“ Danton immediately rose, and with one of his violent gestures and coarse oaths, opposed the proposition, which he considered as cowardly. The tree of liberty required to be watered with the blood of tyrants, and the punishment of one king would strike terror into the hearts of all others.

“ Robespierre was of the same opinion, but he went more into detail. He was more refined in his cruelty than Danton. He insisted upon the necessity of a formal trial, which would give a semblance of justice to their proceedings, without being of the least service to the monarch, whose guilt was placed beyond a doubt. Besides, in the cor-

respondence which the Committee kept up with the English Jacobins, it was made a *sine quâ non* that the precedent of the trial of Charles I. should be followed. This would give heart to the English revolutionists, who would thereby be convinced that no intention was entertained of abolishing the republican, and returning to the monarchical, *régime*.

“ Our correspondence with England, Scotland, and Ireland, was carried on, not direct to or from England, but by the circuitous route of Ireland, and chiefly from one of the southern ports in that country, from whence smuggling vessels easily conveyed them to the French coast, and returned with the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety. This mode of correspondence was never suspected by the English Government, nor were any of the papers or correspondence seized at the time of the arrest of those persons whose trials took place towards the end of the year 1794. The fact is, that the persons who were taken up by the English Government, and tried, were none of them the men with whom the Committee of Public Safety had corresponded. Nothing seemed to us, at one time, to be more encouraging than the prospect of affairs in that country; we were prepared for an immediate explosion.

“ But the measure which the English Jacobins expected, and which the Committee of Public Safety, the Orleanists, and the Robespierres, the Dantons, and the Barrères, had determined upon, was one of the means which retarded

instead of accelerating the progress of the revolutionary cause, and made the revolution itself an example to be shunned rather than a precedent to be imitated. The king was brought to trial. I was, of course, in my place as a member of the Convention. The Jacobins expected that he would exhibit in this trying moment the same meekness which had marked his conduct from the commencement of the revolution.

“ I had earnestly entreated the Duke of Orleans not to be present at the trial; urging that, as he would not openly espouse the king’s cause, his absence might be attributed to a humane desire not to sit in judgment upon a man to whom he was so nearly related. I had hoped that he would have felt the soundness of my advice. But after I had left him, Robespierre and another member of the Committee of Public Safety pressed upon him the necessity of sacrificing any feelings of kindred to the duty he owed to his country. They instanced the case of Brutus, and persuaded him (I fear he required but little persuasion) to an act which has made his name odious to all posterity. Robespierre had his own motives,—he was anxious to make the duke his tool, that he might afterwards be the better able to sacrifice him at pleasure.

“ The king was accompanied to the bar of the Convention by his noble defenders Malesherbes, Tronchet, and De Sèze. There was nothing forced in his demeanour,—nothing of that assumed courage which a man under such

perilous circumstances thinks it necessary to adopt. It was calm and dignified. It was the air of a man conscious of his innocence, and from that consciousness derived his intrepidity. It was a moment of thrilling interest—the last of a long line of monarchs was standing at the bar to plead for life and death before men who, but a few, few months since, would have bent the knee to him in a spirit of abject servility and homage.

“The President of the National Convention on that memorable day made every attempt to insult the fallen monarch and to entrap him. But the effort, whilst it disgraced the individual, placed the character of the monarch in a more distinguished point of view. They addressed him as Louis Capet, though, as they were trying him for the crimes alleged to have been committed by him as King of France, they ought not merely in point of delicacy, but of right, to have given him the title. The unmanliness of the insult produced no reproach, no indignant complaint from the monarch. He answered every question with a readiness and candour as unexpected by his judges as it was honourable to himself. The defence having been concluded, the king rose to address the Convention. Although losing none of that dignified bearing so remarkable in the Bourbons, I was more struck by the expression of benevolence which was spread over his otherwise melancholy features, and which was the best refutation that could have been given to those charges of

tyranny and oppression with which it had been endeavoured to connect his name and conduct. It is clear, indeed, that he would have been acquitted on the very first day of his trial; but the Jacobin clubs as well as the committees had neglected nothing that could prejudice and inflame the public mind.

“ After the Convention had adjourned, and Louis XVI. had been sent back to the prison of the Temple, we met in committee, where we had no sooner assembled than Danton, striking the table with his fist, burst into the following exclamation:—‘ Qui aurait cru que ce — de Capet aurait montré tant de calme, et même de courage ? ’ And, turning to Robespierre, he added,—‘ Sacré — ! que nous avons mal fait ! C'est toi, qui nous as forcé à ce coup. Nous aurions trouvé des moyens plus sûrs et plus secrets ! ’ Robespierre retorted upon Danton, and from that moment a breach took place between them, which led to the death of Danton. The Committee were thus divided between the Dantonists and the partisans of Robespierre. But they acted in concert against the king.

“ Your imagination cannot figure to itself the excitement which then pervaded the metropolis. Few men had leisure, and scarcely the desire, to deliberate with coolness. Reason, judgment, and justice, were without the slightest influence; and though the irresponsibility of the king was a fundamental principle of the constitution, it had no more weight than so much waste paper against the sweeping plea of expediency and state necessity. You will remember

that the only difference in the Convention was as to the nature of the punishment; and that of the seven hundred and twenty voters, six hundred and eighty-three declared him guilty. Thirty-seven refused to vote; but not one of them dared to pronounce the king innocent.

“And now I come to a point in my history which I would willingly forget. I voted for the king’s death, being then impressed with a belief in his treasonable conduct, and the conviction that banishment or imprisonment would only multiply the dangers of our situation, and that consequently his death would be the best means of establishing the Republic.

“I have lived to convince myself of the injustice of my opinion, and to feel the bitterest remorse for the share I took in the transaction.

“Never shall I forget that execrated day, when the sentence of death was pronounced, and the *appel nominal* was resorted to. There were seven hundred and twenty-one members present. When the name of the Duke of Orleans (*Égalité*) was called, almost every one expected that, if he did answer, he would have voted for some punishment short of death. He disappointed this expectation, and, without the slightest hesitation, gave his vote for “Death.” No sooner had he given it than an unanimous cry of ‘*Le scélérat!*’ burst from every part of the assembly. Three hundred and sixty-six voted for death. An ineffectual effort was made to appeal to the nation.

The majority then decided that the sentence of death should be executed within twenty-four hours.

“There was a long silence in the Committee that night, a feeling as if some sudden event would occur to prevent the consummation of our purpose. Our sittings were permanent, as they had been during the whole trial,—that is, they were never suspended, even during the night, for we had constant communications with the Sections, particularly the most Jacobin ones. We had reports every hour; and aides-de-camp were in constant attendance to convey our orders to the national guard.

“Scarcely one of the members of the Committee sat down, but all continued walking about, making frequent ejaculations in a low tone of voice. Danton at length spoke out:—‘Enfin ce —— de Capet ne nous gênera plus. Demain nous aurons sa tête dans le petit panier!’ The coarseness and cruelty of the man who was making a mockery of the king’s last moments occasioned an almost universal shudder. As I passed Robespierre, who still kept walking, I heard him mutter to himself,—‘Et ta tête, coquin, roulera aussi!’ Barrère merely observed,—‘Enfin la République sera consolidée!’

“An aide-de-camp was now announced, who brought the intelligence of the murder of a member of the Convention, who had voted for the king’s death. He was murdered in the Café de Foix, in the Palais Royal. The assassin had been immediately arrested. This intelligence

produced a general consternation in the Committee, for we suspected that this would not be the only deed of vengeance which the Bourbonists would inflict. We ordered the public accuser to be sent for immediately, and the assassin to be brought before us. He was brought in, bound with cords, between two gendarmes.

“He was asked his name and occupation. He replied boldly to each question, and added, ‘a sworn enemy of all regicides and Jacobins!’ Being interrogated as to his motive, he replied, ‘that it was to set an example to every loyal subject to select some one member of the Convention who had voted for the king’s death, and make him pay the penalty of his life.’ Danton:—‘Sacré! mais c’est un peu trop fort!’ Barrère, whose nerves were never strong, looked alarmed. Robespierre said,—‘Quelle histoire nous chantez-vous donc? Bah! c’est une mensonge!’ The prisoner (an officer of the Swiss guard) surveyed him with a menacing look, and then said,—

“‘You are amongst the first marked out for vengeance. Every one of you will be cut off. Do you think that France has no loyal hearts ready to die for their sovereign? If one fail in the attempt he will be succeeded by another. Not a single regicide will be permitted to live. I have struck my blow; others will follow with theirs.’

“Many questions were put to him to draw forth information of a plot against the Republic, and the persons concerned in it; but he refused to furnish the slightest

intelligence, simply asserting that each would be informed of the plot when he became the victim of it. He was then ordered to prison, from whence in a few hours he was conveyed to the scaffold.

“ But as we could not believe that this would be a solitary instance of vengeance, the Committee redoubled its precautions. The number of guards in attendance was trebled, and, as the execution of the king was to take place the next morning, cannon were planted on the bridges, on each side of the Place Louis Quinze, and at the entrance of the walks which lead from the Place to the Tuileries and to the Champs Elysées. Additional troops were stationed in and about the Temple; and Santerre, to whom was confided the command of the military escort that was to conduct the king to the scaffold, was sent for to receive the most positive orders to accelerate the procession as much as possible, and not to suffer any delay after the king had ascended the scaffold. A cannon discharged from the corner of the Rue St. Florestan was to announce that the sentence had been carried into execution.

“ There were no thoughts of sleep that night in the minds of the Committee. Each was too much occupied with the next day’s awful programme. No rolling of carriages or waggons was heard, for none were allowed to pass till after the execution. The monotonous step of the troops as they marched along the streets, and the heavy tread of the gendarmes’ horses, as they went their rounds

to prevent or disperse any groups in the squares or boulevards, were the only sounds that disturbed the gloomy silence of the night of the 20th January. One or two of the members of the Committee occasionally inspected the different posts, to ascertain that such officers had been stationed there as had been selected by the Committee. Santerre himself was closely watched by two of our most confidential spies, lest he might waver in his resolution at the last moment, and suffer some friend of the Bourbon family to gain access to the ill-fated monarch.

“ The night was cold and raw, and a heavy fog hung over Paris. The public mind and feeling seemed hushed into a still and solemn silence, as though they apprehended the certain advent of some impending calamity that was to overwhelm themselves and their families in one general ruin. Nothing, in short, was wanting to complete the horror and dreariness of the scene.

“ I know not whether my feelings were shared by any members of the Committee, but, whilst wishing that the deed were done, I dreaded the arrival of the fatal moment.

“ The morning dawned at length, and the crime was consummated. The brutal exultation of Danton, when the booming of the gun announced that the royal victim had passed from life to death, burst forth in the following joyous exclamation:—‘ Il a péri, le——tyran! Vive la République!’ Robespierre maintained his usually stern and sullen aspect.

“ After the execution I wrapped myself closely in my

cloak, and visited different parts of Paris, to mark the effect upon the minds of the people. Many of the Parisians would have shut their shops, as on a day of mourning. But the terror inspired by the Jacobins was so great that no person dared to show any external sign of horror or regret. Still no one could fail to recognize, in the general aspect of the city, the presence of a great calamity. The shops were open as usual, but none frequented them, and the persons who kept them were not visible. Groups were not permitted to be formed in the streets, and friends, as they passed each other, stopped not to pay compliments or make inquiries, but interchanged fearful or gloomy looks, and passed on. Even the most determined Jacobins seemed for the moment to be stunned by the blow, and spoke not in their usual style of boasting and menace. The only coaches seen in the streets were those attended by gendarmes conveying some state prisoner to the Conciergerie. Occasionally might be seen a single pedestrian hurrying with quick step along the boulevards, unable to conceal his indignation, which vented itself in execrations and menaces against the régicides. If I went into any of the cafés or restaurants it was as if I was entering the abode of silence. There were persons in them, but they were all employed in reading the journals of the day. The entrance of every fresh person seemed to rouse their attention for a moment; but no one conversed with his neighbour, lest, if he happened to make use of an expression which might be construed into

a feeling of pity for the fate of the decapitated monarch, the police, whose engines pervaded all society, would immediately drag him to prison and the scaffold. The approach of night was dreaded, for strange apprehensions were entertained of fresh insurrection and renewed carnage. Men believed that the royalists, though not strong enough to save the king, would revenge themselves upon the most obnoxious members, or set fire to different parts of the capital. Rockets were occasionally thrown up after nightfall, and these were believed by the Jacobins to be signals from the royalists, and by the royalists supposed to be preludes to some system of sweeping arrests and massacre on the part of the Jacobins.

“The death of the king, which was to secure the stability of the Republic, was deemed insufficient of itself to accomplish that end, and was therefore followed up by the proscription and punishment of all who were themselves, or through their relations or connections, supposed to be attached to the ancient *régime*.

“Then ensued an era the like of which no eye had ever seen, nor tongue described. Every crime was committed in the name of liberty; and mercy, justice, and religion were banished from the land. Men courted the applause of the populace by the avowal of atheism. The shrine of the Virgin was profaned by the presence of the courtesan; and the goddess of Reason seated herself upon the altar of the living God. The religion of our Redeemer

was scoffed at as a fraud upon mankind, and abolished by a decree of the Convention. Impunity for crime was openly proclaimed by the doctrine that death was but an eternal sleep. None were secure from punishment but the guilty; innocence afforded no protection, and infancy and old age were equally unsafe. Every day witnessed whole families perishing on the scaffold; and three minutes were sufficient to cut off three generations. The virtuous Malesherbes, his daughter and her child, were all executed at the same time. The veriest wretch that had been released from the galleys was received as a competent witness against the most upright magistrates; and Fouquier-Tinville, the public accuser, had always evidence at command to swear away the lives of any one who might be obnoxious to the Jacobins, or who might be selected as a sacrifice to individual revenge. It was sufficient to denounce a man as an enemy to the Republic, and the bare denunciation was taken as equivalent to proof. Suspicion was held to justify imprisonment, and even death; nay, that the facility of clearing the ground for the occupation of the new aspirants to power might be rendered more ample, victims were arraigned, condemned, and executed on the unheard of charge of '*suspicion of being suspected.*' And thus no pretexts were wanting, and no door was left unopened for the admission of the foulest and most colourless accusations that the malice and ingenuity of these demons could devise. In the old republics a reward was bestowed upon him

who had saved the life of a citizen ; in the modern one a premium was offered for taking it away.

And, as if the death of the king did not suffice to appease the fury of these Jacobinical fiends, they must need glut their vengeance with the blood of the beautiful and heroic queen of France, and of the excellent and virtuous Madame Elizabeth ; whilst the only son of Louis XVI. was left to pine in prison, through ill-treatment, neglect, and want.

“ Of all the men who perished on the scaffold, with the exception of Danton, Robespierre, and their companions, the execution of the Duke of Orleans was the least regretted. All remembered his insatiable animosity against the royal family, all recollected his savage and unnatural vote against the king. He passed on to the scaffold, in the midst of the assembled multitude, without a single exclamation of pity ; and, with a refinement of cruelty, almost as barbarous as his own nature, he was paraded in triumph before the doors of his own residence, ‘ The Palais Royal.’ He died under the double torture of the curses of mankind and the stings of his own conscience. I had abjured the duke’s acquaintance from the moment he gave his vote against the king ; and this was so well known in the Committee of Public Safety, that it saved me probably from being involved in the same fate to which Robespierre had consigned him for the very action which he had recommended as emulating ‘ all Greek, all Roman fame.’ ”

“ There remained now, of the more violent of the Terrorists, Robespierre, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Herault

de Sechelles, and others. These were divided into two parties, of which Danton and Robespierre were respectively the leaders. A third was formed by the members of the commune of Paris; but, the two former parties uniting to effect its overthrow, it was speedily annihilated. Robespierre now directed the whole weight of his power against Danton and his adherents, who, in less than a fortnight afterwards, shared the fate of the members of the commune. But these executions, which Robespierre had designed as the means of consolidating his power, were soon rendered intolerable, and but three months had elapsed, after the death of Danton, when he experienced the same fate, with twenty-one of his accomplices.

“ I pass over the interval between the punishment of Robespierre and the day of the Sections in 1795. The Convention had become odious to the nation for its crimes and its cowardice. Another revolution seemed to be inevitable. The new Constitution, which the Convention proclaimed, was obnoxious to the National Guard, who, speaking the feelings of the Parisians, wished for a state of greater security, and would have rejoiced at the restoration of the Bourbons, could they have been restored without any reference to the past, for the punishment of revolutionary offences, or for the resumption of national property. The National Guard, however, determined to dictate to the Convention, and assembled a large force. The Convention must have yielded, but for the appearance, on the revolutionary stage, of a young man, who was to

change the face and fortune of affairs, not only in France, but throughout the whole continent. This young man, Bonaparte, was selected by Barras to command the regular troops against the Sections, and by his vigorous and prompt measures (he had but a few hours to arrange them) quelled the insurrection, and restored the power and influence of the Assembly. In consequence of the new Constitution, I became a member of the Council of Five Hundred. All my colleagues in the Committee of Public Safety, with the exception of two or three, had perished. I know not to what cause I ought to attribute my safety; perhaps it was on account of my insignificance, and of the little mention that had ever been made of my name. But I soon found that I was obnoxious to every party: to the Royalists, for the share I had in the king's death; to the moderate or Anti-Jacobin party, for the post I had held in the Committee of Public Safety. Shunned by my friends, and disowned by every Section that retained any authority, or semblance of authority, in Paris, I stood before the world a solitary being, cut off from all social intercourse, as if I had been the sole actor in the gigantic crime that had been perpetrated in the much abused name of Liberty. They who did not detest me, suspected me; whilst they who did not suspect me, detested me. Thus gloomily and wretchedly passed my life for four years, till Bonaparte's return from Egypt.

“ The affair of the 18th and 19th Brumaire (10th and 11th November), 1799, produced another order of things,

and another Constitution in the ever-changing destinies of France. The Councils of Ancients and of Five Hundred, with the five Directors, ceased to exist. By some fatality I was close to the Deputy Arena in the orangery at St. Cloud, where, as was said, he drew a dagger against Bonaparte. I became immediately an object of suspicion, and thus Bonaparte and his adherents were added to the enemies I have already mentioned,—the Royalists and the Anti-Jacobins. My legislative functions ceased from that memorable day, and I became a proscribed man. I had neither wife nor family, in whose affection I could have found consolation and peace. I knew not that I had any relation in the world. No one loved me—not a living creature was attached to me, save one, whose fidelity was neither increased by prosperity, nor diminished by adversity—my dog Castor, who had been my companion for many years.

“ I had now to devise some means of subsistence, having been deprived of my legislative functions, and without any chance of obtaining any other public employment. Paris could no longer afford me a secure asylum, for who would countenance or employ a regicide? I was a good classical scholar and mathematician, and hoped to obtain a situation as preceptor in some distant part of France. I obtained one at Bar-sur-Aube, but it was with difficulty that I could procure a passport in my own name, so well known, and so obnoxious; and yet I did not dare to change it. I left Paris in the

diligence, taking with me my faithful Castor. It was dark when I set out. The diligence was full, but it was impossible to discover who were my fellow-travellers. We stopped to breakfast at a small village, and when we re-entered the diligence to continue our journey, the conversation became general. We discussed the recent events at Paris, and I soon found that they were all in favour of the revolution, which had annihilated the Councils of Ancients and of Five Hundred. I took especial care, therefore, not to let drop a word which could enable them to discover that I had been a member of that ill-fated assembly. We dined at Coulommières, and the first person who met my eyes on alighting from the diligence at the inn was one of the gendarmes who had been in constant attendance upon the Committee of Public Safety. I spoke to him, and remarked that his answers were short, dry, and repulsive. He was communicative enough, however, to my fellow-passengers, as I soon experienced. At dinner the familiarity, which had previously subsisted, was changed into behaviour the most frigid and uncourteous;—no one spoke to me. If I addressed any one, he pretended to be entirely occupied with the person next him. Nay, it seemed as if each had removed his chair as far as possible from me, that he might not touch so proscribed a being. The pang of the moment was bitter, but I took my resolution instantly. I drew the landlord aside, and told him

that the confinement of the diligence had disordered me, and that I had determined to prosecute the rest of my journey on foot ; and with my only friend Castor, who was rejoiced at being again at liberty, I took the road to Bar. It was a fatiguing journey, rendered more so by solitude and the bitterness of my feelings. However, I reached my destination, and immediately entered upon my functions as preceptor. I believe I gave sufficient satisfaction to my employers. But I abstained from frequenting either the cafés, theatres, or public assemblies, lest some person might recognize the regicide. There were beautiful and sequestered walks along the banks of the Aube, and there I wandered every evening with my dog. I had now full opportunity for entering into a strict examination of my past conduct. I went carefully over all the documents relative to the king's administration, his arrest, trial, and death. Now, that the revolutionary stimulus had lost its power, I was able to reason impartially, to weigh and compare the evidence for and against him, and to come to a deliberate and just decision upon the whole case. I would not be satisfied with one review, I re-travelled the same ground, and always arrived at the same conclusion. The monstrous injustice which had been committed, the innocence of the king, and the horrible crime of his death, were demonstrated with almost mathematical certainty. I was absolutely stupefied at the fact of not a single deputy

being found, in an assembly of seven hundred and twenty, bold and just enough to pronounce his innocence.

“ It is the custom in the public academies to have exhibition days, in which the scholars are publicly examined. A large concourse of their friends is thus brought together, and the masters are, of course, expected to be present. I would most willingly have absented myself from it, but this was impracticable. The public examination took place, and the usual rewards were distributed. Several of my pupils were amongst the number, and I began to think I had obtained a situation which promised me at least a decent maintenance and repose. But I had been recognized by one of the parents of my pupils, and the principal of the establishment required my attendance next morning in his private cabinet. I was not long in being informed of the cause. A regicide could not, of course, be a fit preceptor for youth, and the parents of many of the boys had insisted on my removal. Complaint would have been useless, and I retired with one observation,—that I could not blame them for the view they had taken, even at the expense of justice, but I could solemnly aver that my political opinions had never been intruded upon my pupils.

“ I had been six months at Bar without having made one acquaintance that could be of any assistance to me in my extremity. I knew not where to go;—to Paris I could not return. I knew of no place farther from Paris that

could promise safety. At Bar I could not remain. I left it, determining that I would take the first road that led eastward from the city. Still, accompanied by my dog, I walked as fast and as long as I could, that I might be at as great a distance as possible before night. With great fatigue I accomplished nearly twelve leagues, having taken but little refreshment the whole day. Towards the evening, I discovered a considerable village in the distance, and hoped to reach it before dark; but I presumed too much upon the strength of my constitution. On a sudden, I felt myself very faint and exhausted. I was seized with giddiness, and from that moment lost all consciousness. How long I lay by the road-side in this insensible state I cannot tell; but at last the moaning of my dog, who had placed himself close by me, brought a woman to my assistance; and by the aid of her husband, I was removed to their abode, where, after being laid on a bed, I soon recovered. I then informed them that I was a traveller who had fainted on the road from the joint effects of want of nourishment and fatigue. The kind-hearted couple instantly provided me a plain but welcome repast, and insisted on my resting myself for two or three days. I complied most willingly, not knowing any place to which I could proceed without risk of discovery. During these three days I found that my kind hosts had several children, who, from the isolation of the place, had not been able to obtain any education; for there was no school, and no schoolmaster, in the village.

The idea immediately struck me that I might be able to procure a humble livelihood, and be more secure from recognition here than in a place of greater note. I consulted my host, who seconded my wishes with the greatest readiness; and behold me now schoolmaster of the village of Beaucaire. The children of my host were my first pupils, and, being very assiduous in the discharge of my duty, I soon increased the number of my scholars, and was held in great respect by their parents.

“Four years elapsed without any event of importance. If I did not enjoy happiness, I was at least tranquil, and my vocation, though humble, was respectable and useful. I could have been well content to have passed the remainder of my days in the village, but for me there seemed to be no permanent repose, and no secure home. Bonaparte, on his way to Italy to be crowned king in 1805, (having the year before been raised to the imperial dignity,) was to take his route through the village, and every place, however small, was expected to present an address of congratulation on the occasion. We had no public character in the village—no mayor—no military officer—no superior officer of police; but an address was deemed a matter of necessity. The principal persons of the village, chiefly small farmers, assembled and requested my attendance. It was then resolved that no person was so proper, to draw up the address and to present it, as the schoolmaster. This was a cruel and unexpected blow. If

I refused, it would be imputed to a want of regard for the villagers, and of allegiance to the head of the government; if I consented, recognition would be sure to follow. Bonaparte was not a man to forget, or to forgive. But this risk I was obliged to incur,—I had no alternative; and, impressed with the belief that whatever adverse event might happen in consequence would arise from the vote I had given against the king, I yielded with apparent cheerfulness to the desires of the good villagers. The address was prepared, and, at the head of the procession, I took my station at the entrance to the village. Bonaparte arrived, and, instead of passing with his usual rapidity, was obliged to halt on account of some damage to his carriage. He alighted from it, whilst it was being repaired, and walked up and down with his usual impatient step, his hands behind him. I advanced with the deputation, and begged permission to read our address. 'Read! read!' he replied in a quick tone of voice, and the address was read. He confronted me, and stood still. No doubt the villagers were inwardly exulting at the proof they had given of their loyalty; whilst he was occupied with thoughts of more importance. He then enquired 'the name of the village, and whether I was mayor or syndic, or what public office I held?' I answered his questions briefly, and informed him that unless the schoolmaster could be called a public officer, there was no other. 'What was the chief trade carried

on? what the amount of our taxes? what the number of the conscripts furnished?' To none of these enquiries could I give him any satisfactory answer. My ignorance surprised him, and he asked me 'whether I was not a native of the village.' I replied in the negative, but that I had resided there some time. 'How long?' 'About four years.' 'What was the cause of my fixing my residence in so obscure a place?' 'The want of a more lucrative employment.' 'What did I teach the children?' 'Only common arithmetic, writing, reading, and mensuration; there were none who required a classical education, or were able to enter upon a course of mathematical studies.' 'I understood mathematics, then?' 'I answered in the affirmative.' 'In all its branches? in its connection with the operations of war—with the management of artillery in the field—and with the siege and defence of fortified places?' I replied that I did. He looked surprised, and bluntly demanded 'why I had not chosen a military life?' I answered that my inclinations led me to civil employments. 'What had they been before I resided in the village?' 'The same.' 'Where?' 'At Bar-sur-Aube.' 'Why did I not remain there, where I might have had a larger field for my exertions?' 'A difference of opinion with my employers.' 'Upon political subjects, no doubt?' I replied still in the affirmative.

"'And you thought it necessary to conceal yourself in this village?'

“ ‘Conceal !’ I exclaimed, with a degree of indignation I could not repress ; besides, it was necessary that I should not degrade myself in the eyes of the villagers, all anxious listeners to our conversation. Bonaparte immediately fixed his eyes upon me.

“ ‘And before you came to Bar-sur-Aube, what might have been your profession ?’

“ ‘Member of the Council of Five Hundred ; of the National Convention ; of the second Legislative Assembly.’

“ ‘And of the Committee of Public Safety ?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘And you voted the death of the king ?’

“ ‘I voted with Sièyes and the majority.’ (Sièyes had been one of Bonaparte’s most confidential advisers.)

“ ‘And you were in the Council of Five Hundred at St. Cloud, on the 18th and 19th Brumaire ?’

“ ‘I attended my duty when the sittings of the Council of Five Hundred were ordered by the Council of Ancients to be transferred to St. Cloud.’

“ ‘And you recollect the events of those memorable days ?’

“ ‘Perfectly. The Council was dispersed by the military, assisted by the President of the Council, Lucien Bonaparte.’

“ ‘There was some attempt made by the Deputy Arena ?’

“ ‘It was said so ; but I did not see it, though I was close to him.’

“ ‘Perhaps it was a convenient blindness ?’

“‘I am incapable, sire, of a falsehood. I had no previous intimacy, no acquaintance, with the Deputy Arena; he was a countryman of your majesty’s.’

“‘My calmness and courage seemed to surprise him.

“‘One of my grenadiers warded off the blow?’

“‘I repeat to your majesty that I saw no blow attempted; and, if there had been, I had no concern in it, though by chance I happened, in that moment of confusion, to be near my colleague. I had no enmity, public or private, to gratify. I discharged my duty as an honest citizen. Who but a madman would have selected such a moment for attempting your majesty’s life, surrounded as you were by your guards?’

“‘The assassin, then, you think, ought to go to work more quietly, more secretly?’

“‘As I hate assassination, I have never contemplated the best means of committing it.’

“‘Bah! bah! des mots, des phrases!’

“He was now told that his carriage was ready. He immediately got into it, and, as soon as he was seated, said to me, ‘On my return from Italy I may take a different route; but do you report yourself to the prefect of Lyons.’ I bowed, and he departed.

“During the whole of this conference every word had been heard by the villagers who had accompanied me; and thus was disclosed every particular of the history of their schoolmaster. It had produced an immediate revulsion in

their feelings towards me. Without speaking a word or saluting me they moved off in a body, leaving me quite alone. I returned disconsolate enough to my humble abode, and prepared to resume my occupation. But at the usual hour of school next day, not a boy attended of the fifty or sixty of whom the school consisted. The children of my kind host were amongst the absentees. My means of subsistence, humble as they were, were thus destroyed in an instant; but, unconscious of any offence or neglect in my occupation, I called upon my host to express my surprise, and to enquire the reason. Respect, kindness, had all vanished. The mark of Cain upon me, from having voted the death of the good king, and the suspicions entertained by the great emperor, were sufficient reasons for not committing their children to the care of a man capable of such actions. I remonstrated against the injustice of this conduct towards a man who had never instilled improper political or immoral principles into the minds of their children. But remonstrance was of no effect, and it absolutely appeared as if my presence was deemed a profanation. I left them, with thanks for their former kindness, and took my way through the village homeward. What a contrast in two days! But eight-and-forty hours ago there was not an inmate of any house or cottage who would not have hastened to greet me, as I passed, and to invite me to their humble but hospitable board. Now, every door was closed. Those who were in the street no sooner discovered me in

the distance than they hastened home, to avoid all contact or conversation with me. I could not have been more shunned had I been infected with the plague. Oh ! bitter agony, to be thus cast off from all converse with one's fellow-creatures ! to meet no eye that does not express scorn ! to hear no voice that does not convey reproach !

“ Again was I thrown upon the fidelity of my poor Castor ; but where to steer our course, or to find shelter for our houseless heads, I could not divine. The village no longer afforded me a home ;—nay, when I wished to dispose of the few effects I possessed, with the view of adding something to my small means, I could not find a single purchaser. No one would contaminate himself with the possession of any article which had belonged to a regicide. Blessings upon the poor and innocent villagers !—their prejudices did them honour, for they were founded on virtue !

“ I locked up my cottage, leaving the goods in it, with an inscription on the door,—‘ For the accommodation of any poor traveller destitute of a home.’ I had to run the gauntlet of the village once more as I passed from my cottage to the high road. My heart was full of grief; for there is something in taking a final farewell, in casting a last look upon objects, even the most inanimate, with which we have been familiarly acquainted, that ‘ weighs heavily upon the heart.’ The village had been such a quiet asylum—its inhabitants had been so hospitable and kind, that I could have no other feeling than that of deep and

painful regret. I should have experienced some alleviation, some diminution of the bitterness of that feeling, had a single person given me a parting shake of the hand, or bestowed upon me a single blessing. But no one spoke to me, no one came near me, and I went forth with my dog a forlorn and banished man.

“After leaving the village, I had to ascend a high hill; and when I had reached the top (shall I confess the weakness of my nature?) I could not refrain from tears as I turned a longing, lingering look upon the spot on which my cottage stood, and on the peaceful dwellings that surrounded it.

“Exul ut, invitus, cedit, mandante tyranno,
Littora nativi linquere jussus agri;
Triste iter instituit, fatis vexatus inquis,
Et proferre pedes, et retinere timet:

“Donec, in excelsi consistens culmine montis,
Desuper in charos lumina torquet agros;
Quà, bene nota, citò dum lumine quæque pererrat,
Irrigat albentes plurima gutta genas.”*

“I linger too long upon these scenes, but age may plead some excuse for garrulity, and I love to dwell upon this strange epoch of my life.

“Bowed down, however, by these successive disappointments, and persuaded that a life, prolonged under a sense of incessant apprehension and alarm, would only point the pang of remorse for the share I had in the

* These lines formed part of an exercise “sent up for good” by the late Dr. Hawtrey, and were written by a friend of the author’s at Eton.

king's death, I yielded at once to the thought, which rushed into my mind at this depressing crisis, that I could only find a refuge and release from all my troubles in death and the grave. I embraced the idea with a morbid kind of satisfaction, and a moment sufficed to confirm me in the belief that there must be a limit beyond which human endurance cannot be expected to go; and that, if it be God's will that we should have reached that point, it is also mercifully permitted to us to fix and determine the boundary ourselves. With this argument to console me, and which, to my weak perceptions and disordered mind, appeared so just and natural, I formed my resolution on the instant, and prepared to 'shuffle off this mortal coil.'

"At a short distance from the village flowed a river, both deep and rapid, having its banks lined on either side by closely-planted alders. This river formed part of the landscape which, from the brow of the hill, I was now looking upon for the last time; and this feeling of finality, with reference to the gratification of our outward senses, no doubt suggested to my mind the far more complete and comprehensive one involved in the destruction of that life from which those senses derive their capabilities for enjoyment, or their proneness to depression and despair.

"With these gloomy thoughts, and with an inexplicable dread of being discovered in the act I was about to commit, I wrapped my cloak closely round me and de-

scended the hill in a contrary direction to that from which I had approached it. A quarter-of-an-hour brought me to the river's edge : all there was still and silent, save the gentle rippling of the water. Not a sound or a footfall fell upon my ear—not a living object met my enquiring gaze ; and I was glad to perceive that the low and sweeping alders would most effectually screen me from all observation. With a slow and stealthy tread I approached the thickest of them, and was in the act of descending the bank (a somewhat precipitous one) for the purpose of ascertaining the depth of the water at that particular point, when my foot suddenly slipped, and I was carried almost to the margin of the river. With the natural instinct of preservation I held fast by one of the branches, on a level with my breast, and in this position retained my grasp of it for several minutes. Under ordinary circumstances, my first impulse would have been to crawl or scamper up the bank, out of danger of the dreaded stream, with all possible haste ; but the circumstances which had placed me in that position were not of an ordinary character. I had gone to that spot with the settled purpose of putting an end to my life ; and yet I am now found, from a sudden surprise which aroused the primary instinct of our nature, doing my utmost to preserve it. Surely, thought I, still retaining my hold of the branch, the love of life was not implanted in our nature for nothing, else this bough would never have been seized by me, when chance

and accident were aiding me in the accomplishment of an object on which I was so intently and so resolutely bent. Surely, thought I, still ruminating on the impression which this incident was probably meant to convey to my mind—surely, the hand of God is in this, and as surely do I feel that I now stand before my Maker a rebuked, if not a repentant, sinner. I did not trust myself to look again on the river, but with an averted face climbed slowly up the bank, and retraced my steps to the hill.

“Arrived there, I turned my eyes once again in the direction of the quiet village that lay beneath; and I could not help contrasting the repose and contentment which reigned in the humble abodes of these rustic boors, with the exciting scenes through which I had already passed, and the still more harrowing ones that yet awaited me. I had leisure also for debating what course I should take, and what efforts I should make to procure the means of subsistence. At length I determined upon a step which you will, perhaps, think was the last I ought to have adopted. I resolved to proceed to Lyons, and to report myself to the prefect as the emperor had ordered me. Nothing more desperate than my present situation could befall me, and I knew not that I had placed myself within the range or penalty of the law. He might seize my person and imprison me,—but whither could I fly in France without being within the reach of his power?

“These, and a thousand other doubts and difficulties, were presented to my unsettled mind; but, as I was in the position of a man who discerns danger in every step he meditates taking, I decided upon going to Lyons, and trusting to Providence for the issue.

“It was not difficult to obtain a private conference with the prefect, a worthy man who had lost all his sons by the conscription. I wrote to him in my own name. There was a courtesy, I cannot call it a kindness, in his reception of me, and I entered at once upon my business, and gave him a faithful sketch of my political life.

“The candour and sincerity of my manner produced their effect upon the prefect, who, after a pause, in which he appeared to be reflecting whether or no he should place me under the surveillance of his officers, desired me to call again the next day. I did so, and he pursued his enquiries more in detail; but I had little more to disclose, except some minor points which did not at all vary my original narrative. I had two more conferences with him, but they led only to repetitions of our former discussions. No doubt the police had their officers about me, who could report my proceedings and mode of living to the prefect; but they had nothing suspicious against me. I neither visited, nor was visited by, a single being.

“So forlorn a situation could not but inspire a feeling of pity. We can scarcely picture to ourselves a more wretched condition than that of being forsaken by the

world. It seems to be a punishment too severe even for the greatest criminal.

“At my last interview, the prefect informed me that he had not received any orders respecting me; and that, having obeyed the commands of the emperor in reporting myself, I was at liberty to remain at Lyons or to quit it, putting, however, the police in possession of my future place of abode. At the same time he proved to me the impossibility of eluding any research that might be made after me; for, during the interviews I had had with him, a painter had been employed to take an accurate likeness of me, which he showed me.

“Having terminated the official part of his business, he made some kind enquiries as to my intentions and destination. I could not give him any satisfactory information, for I was wholly without friends or means. After having reflected for some minutes, he mentioned an Italian family, who had been for some years resident near Toulon, and who were in want of a preceptor. The father had come to Lyons for that purpose, and he would consult him upon it; but it would be necessary to communicate to him the story of my life, that neither party might have to reproach the other with injustice. Count Amalfi was the name of the nobleman; and, after one or two interviews, my services were accepted. I left Lyons with the count, after a grateful farewell to the good prefect.

“Count Amalfi’s political opinions were thoroughly

Italian; that is, he hated the dominion of foreigners, lamented the degeneracy of his countrymen, and ardently desired that Italy should become one great and independent state, in which the Pope should be deprived of all temporal power, and considered only as the head of the Church. The power of Bonaparte was less obnoxious to him than that of any other ruler, on account of his Italian origin; but he looked forward to the moment when Italy should throw off her fetters, and be released from the bondage which had so long oppressed her.

“ I now enjoyed a long interval of repose. The count and the countess were amiable, and their children clever and docile. We passed a life of perfect retirement, mixing in no political intrigues, little solicitous about public events, and believing that the destinies of France and Italy were at last fixed and settled. Bonaparte’s authority seemed to be consolidated, and his marriage with a daughter of Austria, and the birth of a son, appeared to place his dynasty on a rock too strong to be shaken by human hands. But we had not taken into our calculation one contingency: we had only looked for the means of undermining Bonaparte’s power amongst the sovereigns of Europe. Austria was his ally by blood; Russia was too distant to give him any trouble, and, moreover, stood in awe of him; Prussia was in his grasp, Spain at his feet, Denmark in his toils, Sweden and Por-

tugal too feeble to give him any uneasiness : his power and his influence were felt and acknowledged throughout the whole continent. The most formidable enemy to Bonaparte was Bonaparte himself. It may be said of him, that, whilst labouring with one hand to enlarge and heighten the edifice of his power, he was as assiduously undermining its foundations with the other. As I am not about to intrude upon the province of the historian, I shall pass over the events that occurred between the years 1805 and 1814. The restoration of the Bourbons was an event which would have been considered as the dream and prophecy of a madman, had any one predicted it a few months only before it happened.

“The change was by no means acceptable to Count Amalfi. He had in early life been acquainted with many of those philosophers, whose works, if they did not produce the revolution, tended to prepare the public mind for it. He had been intimate with Vergniaud, Brissot, Condorcet, and other members of the Girondist party, and thought it necessary after they had fallen victims to the party of the Mountain to retire from Paris, and live in retirement. To him, therefore, the return of the Bourbons was an event which he considered to be injurious to the real interests of France. He was prepared to expect the preponderance of foreign influence, and the revival of many of those principles and institutions of the old *régime* which had been so

justly abolished. He had many conversations with me on the subject, and hoped, no doubt, to find in me a strenuous supporter of his political opinions; but politics had long ceased to interest me. I had no wish to embark again upon that agitated sea where I had encountered both tempest and shipwreck. I desired to live in retirement and peace, and to render myself useful in the line I had chosen. From being a man of tranquil habits, devoted to his family, and fond of rural pursuits, the count became on a sudden a restless politician, whose whole attention was devoted to the state of parties, and to every shifting scene on the political stage. He engaged in an active correspondence with the malcontents in Paris, went twice or thrice himself to the metropolis, and frequently sent and received couriers. He was absent a full fortnight upon one expedition, which remained a secret from every member of his family. There was much in this state of affairs to alarm me for the count;—I did not doubt that he had engaged in some plot or intrigue against the reigning family, which would certainly expose him to peril, without accomplishing the object of his wishes. The result burst upon me like a clap of thunder. Bonaparte had quitted the Isle of Elba, and suddenly landed at Cannes. The count received immediate information of the event, which seemed to give him more satisfaction than surprise, and he set out forthwith to join the ex-emperor. The rapid and

uninterrupted march to Paris, the facility with which he resumed the reins of government, and the flight of Louis XVIII., are well known. The count accompanied the emperor to Paris, and I then discovered that he had been in active correspondence with him during the whole period of his residence at Elba. He sent for me to join him at Paris, an order which I obeyed with reluctance, and with a foreboding of evil. I had no sooner reached the capital, than the count informed me of the designs he had in view. He would not accept of any post in the ministry, but conjured me to become a member of Bonaparte's Legislative Assembly. I resisted his entreaties to the utmost; I reminded him of the disasters I had experienced, of my unwillingness and unfitness for public employment, and of the little likelihood that power, so regained, could be permanently established. All my efforts were ineffectual; the count attacked me on my weak point,—the gratitude I owed him for the asylum and kindness I had experienced in his family for so many years. I resisted no longer, and was accordingly invested again, after more than fifteen years' absence, with the functions of a legislator.

“ You know the brief existence of the new system, and of the authority of the man who had organized it. He lost everything in losing one battle, and was again deprived, and for ever, of the sovereign power. Paris now became no longer a safe place of residence for the count or for me. When all was over, but before the allies entered Paris,

we quitted it, and returned to the count's residence near Toulon. Here we were employed in making every preparation for a further migration, being quite convinced that the restored family would require a certain number of victims. We were not long in suspense. The ordinance of the 28th July was published, and, though it was modified afterwards, I was unhappily amongst the number of those who were banished for ever from the soil of France. The count, who had not been a member of the Convention which voted Louis XVIth's death, was not included in the same category; but he felt sure that his residence in France would be no longer secure, and therefore he resolved to settle in Italy. I accompanied him, though my functions as tutor to his children had now ceased, both his sons having attained their majority. Though no longer useful as a preceptor, I assisted the count in the management of his property and of his household affairs. His villa was situated in the vicinity of Naples, and combined magnificence with elegance. He interfered no more in political affairs; and you may easily imagine that my recent experience had not made me less anxious to quit the field and attach myself exclusively to a retired and quiet life. I hoped I had now found an asylum for the rest of my days, and that I might safely copy the inscription which Gil Blas put up—

‘Spes et Fortuna valete!
Sat me lusistis : ludite nunc alios!’

“But I had not yet disarmed Fortune of her malice, and was again destined to endure her bitterest frown. The Neapolitan government is one of the most tyrannical and suspicious that ever existed. In no country is the system of espionage carried on with greater zeal and severity. There is not a nobleman, however illustrious and respectable, whose hotel is not beset with spies. Everything that occurs, however insignificant or important, every conversation, every visitor, and every visit, are proclaimed to the police, and always with exaggerations which serve to give the tale-bearer more consequence and a greater claim to reward. It was soon known that the count had arrived from France, and brought in his train a Frenchman who lived quite retired, was of studious habits, and never visited the capital. Such a man could not be other than a dangerous man, a plotter, a Jacobin. More vigilant inquiries were immediately instituted, and it was soon discovered that I was a regicide, and one who, by being a member of Bonaparte’s Legislative Assembly, had come within the denomination of a relapsed regicide. The count was sent for, and had a long conference with the minister and the Inquisitor-General. There was a gloom, an uneasiness in his countenance, when he returned, and his eyes occasionally flashed with indignation.

“After the dinner, which was hurried over with unusual rapidity, and of which neither the count nor the countess partook, the servants were dismissed, and the

count turned towards me with the deepest impression of sorrow. 'My friend,' he said, taking my hand, 'I grieve to be the bearer of sad tidings!—we must part!'

"The intelligence was so unexpected and painful that I made an involuntary start. 'Part, my lord! And why, and wherefore? Is my presence no longer welcome? Have I deserved your displeasure?'

"'No, no, my dear friend. You have always been, and still are, worthy of my friendship; but your residence with me is displeasing to the government. They have intimated this to me in no very graceful manner, and demanded your immediate dismissal. I remonstrated;—I dwelt upon your retired and quiet habits; your unwillingness to mix in any political plots and intrigues; and my readiness to become the guarantee for your peaceable conduct. But it was of no avail. Their resolution had been taken, and when I hinted the impropriety of interference in my family, the only reply was, that if I did not send you away, the government would have you arrested and sent to prison. What was to be said? what could I do?'

"'Nothing more, and perhaps you did too much for your own safety. There remains but one thing for *me* to do,—to take my leave with all speed, and become again a solitary wanderer, hunted down by every government as a beast unfit to live. God bless you, my dear count! The happiest days of my life have been passed under your roof; and, as I am about to quit it for ever, may Provi-

dence, in its mercy, suffer me to find a speedy termination of all my sufferings in the grave !'

"We separated for the night ; and early the next morning, as soon as there was sufficient day-light, I took my departure accompanied by my old, but now feeble, friend, Castor, whose fidelity remained unshaken, though his strength was almost gone. I had left a letter for the count, acquainting him with the reason of my departure without taking a final farewell of the countess and himself, which would have been afflicting to them, and deprived me of the little fortitude I retained.

"I had no fixed purpose. The blow had been so sudden that I had no time to arrange any plan, nor to select any sequestered spot where I might lay down my head and die. I avoided the high road, taking one which led to the mountains. I journeyed slowly, for the ascent was fatiguing, and dog and master were no longer so active as they used to be ; besides, my heart was broken.

"I travelled till evening without meeting a single house or traveller, and without being able to procure the slightest refreshment. Quite worn-out with fatigue, I rested on a bank under a clump of trees ; my dog, as tired as myself, lying at my feet. Our repose was soon interrupted by a noise from an adjacent wood, followed by the discordant voices of men, who appeared to be armed, and of the roughest and sternest countenances. One of them ad-

vanced before the others, and made a blow at me. It did not take effect, but Castor instantly seized the fellow, who, without a moment's hesitation, plunged a stiletto into his throat. The faithful creature howled in agony, and, as if conscious that he had received his death-blow, wished to spend the last moments of life in testifying his affection and gratitude to his master. He licked my hands and feet, raised himself upon his hind legs to receive my caresses, and, with one melancholy and long howl, expired. The ruffians stood still, as if the scene had touched even their rugged hearts. 'You have killed my only friend,—now dispatch me!' I exclaimed. They did not, however, offer me any outrage, but announced their determination to carry me with them to their recess in the mountains. I offered no objection, but solicited permission to bury my faithful friend. They granted it willingly, and even helped me. And as I laid my poor Castor in the silent grave, I wished that I was laid there beside him. We then covered it with the greenest sod, and, when all was done, I sat down and wept like a child.

"Oh nature, how powerful art thou sometimes in moulding forms that seem as hard as iron, and in subduing hearts that appear to be incapable of any touch of human feeling! The banditti, for banditti they were, surveyed the grave and the mourner with pity; and two of them, each taking me by the arm, led me gently away.

"After a walk of two hours we arrived at their abode

in the mountains, and I was presented to their leader. His name was Vanoni. I discovered immediately that he had moved in higher circles, and that his present occupation had been forced upon him by some calamitous event or crime. I was soon favoured with his friendship, and he used every effort to persuade me to become one of his band. This I resisted, and giving the band a sketch of those events which had made me a proscribed outcast, they ceased to importune, but nevertheless detained me.

“ My situation was by no means an enviable one ; but even if I had been set at liberty whither could I go in peace and safety ? I resolved, therefore, to use every effort to mitigate their ferocity, and to induce them to spare human life. I became also their medical adviser, and was of use to them in healing the wounds they received in their different skirmishes. I entitled myself by these means to their gratitude, and there was not one of them who would not at last have perilled his life in my defence.

“ It is not my business to relate, nor would it afford you any pleasure to hear me describe, the different scenes of which I was a witness during my residence among them. At last we were obliged to quit the Calabrian mountains, and to remove to the fastnesses of the Alps, where it was my good fortune to become acquainted with you. Feeling the infirmities of age coming upon me, I was anxious to quit the band, and find some asylum, if possible, in some

one of the German States. The count had enabled me, during the Hundred Days, to invest some money in the funds, the interest of which will be sufficient to maintain me, with economy. My banishment did not involve the confiscation of my property.

“Such is the history of my chequered and disastrous life.”

We arrived at the heath in safety, and Verseuli found an asylum with me till I was able to procure him a more suitable residence in the neighbourhood, which I did in about six months after our return. We were constantly together, and maintained throughout a most friendly intercourse. He seldom, if ever, referred to the painful events of his early life, and I had too great a regard for his feelings ever to touch upon them myself.

LEAF THE TENTH.



My landlord had been most anxious for my return, which unfortunately was delayed beyond the period of his daughter's life. She had been particularly desirous of seeing me in her last moments. She had been declining ever since the trial and death of her husband, for whom, all unworthy as he was, she retained the strongest affection to the last—"First love ! forgotten never !"

Her body was deposited in a quiet nook of the village church, and over her tomb a plain marble tablet has been placed with this short and simple inscription :—

ELLA, BARONESS LAUERSTADT.

LEAF THE LAST.



"Last scene of all."—SHAKESPEARE.

My health began to be visibly impaired. Society did not cheer me; and the company even of the landlord and Verseuli often fatigued me. My mind became more gloomy; my heart more depressed. I would sit for hours in silence, and seemingly lost in thought; but my ideas were wild and wandering, and could not be fixed steadily or long upon anything. I retraced the events of years gone by. I compared the past with the present. I was now become old and feeble, without any of those dear ties that bind man to man. A beloved wife had perished from grief; a son had shortened his own life, had broken the heart of his mother, and left his father a solitary being,—a forlorn and desolate wanderer on the face of the earth !

Amidst such vexing thoughts, one project, one wish, alone engrossed me. All other plans were weak and valueless. It was "the Aaron's rod that swallowed up all the rest." I felt that I had not long to live, but was anxious to lay my bones in the same grave with my wife and son. It may be supposed, from the tenacity with which I clung to this feeling, that my mind had become as enfeebled as my

body. I tried to conquer it, and to regard as a matter of little moment what might become of the body, when the soul had quitted its mortal tenement. But my efforts were vain ; nay, the feeling became more powerful after every struggle to subdue it. I desired once again to look upon the graves of my beloved ones, and in due time to take my place by their mouldering remains. I resolved to return to France.

It may be supposed that Verseuli and my landlord heard this determination with surprise and sorrow. For a while they remonstrated against it ; but they found it unavailing, and opposed it no longer. Winter had now begun to visit us with its chilling blasts and its mantle of snow ; so that my departure was necessarily postponed till the return of spring. The interval I employed in looking over the rough notes I had made upon the many and strange incidents I had witnessed in my travels, and in collecting and arranging from them the materials requisite for weaving them into these “Leaves from the Book of Life.”

They have been selected with the object of advancing the interests of Religion and the cause of Virtue ; and, if they develop the progress of bad and angry passions, they at the same time remove the veil from hypocrisy, unmask the hidden deformities of vice, and cast the darkening shadow of a retributive justice over the abettors and perpetrators of crime.

With these admonitory properties to recommend them,

the “Leaves” are now presented to you, kind Reader, as a Christmas garland. By many, perhaps, they may be thought somewhat too “green;” but should they chance to retain aught of their freshness till the advent of another Christmas, it will be owing entirely to your fostering care and tender treatment of them. Should they, on the other hand, wither and fade away, it will be through the un-skilful manipulation of the artificer who wove them.

THE END.

Y

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